

EDWARD AND SOPHIA.

A NOVEL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

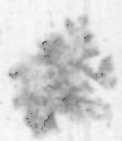
BY A LADY.

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ALWARD MUSEUM



EDWARD AND SOPHIA.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS.

“**I** OWN, brother,” said the justice, (with a serious air) “there is but one part of your conduct that appears to me in the least exceptionable.”

“And what might that be?” returned the merchant, with a look of good-natured earnestness.

“Your religious principles I mean, brother.”

“Aye,” rejoined the rector, “it is much to be regretted, that a man of Mr. Addington’s fine feelings should be a deist.”

VOL. I.

B

Sup-

“Suppose now, doctor,” said the justice, “you endeavour to make a convert of my brother—’twill be no inglorious atchievement.”

“Indeed,” replied the divine, with a self-complacent gravity, “I have before now had the satisfaction of removing some obstinate prejudices of that kind—and I don’t doubt——”

The merchant politely thanked him for his zeal; but assured him his trouble in the present case would be wholly ineffectual.

“Why so, Sir? Explain at least what your objections are to the tenets of Christianity.”

“Really, I have never studied them, doctor.”

“No”—returned the other, with a contemptuous shrug—“why then I think——”

“Hold——” interrupted the merchant—“it was ever my opinion, that



“that the tenets of a religion might
“be best learned by the practice of
“its professors—and, as I have never
“seen any shining traits of excellence
“in the sect you mention, I conclude
“the religion itself can boast no su-
“periority.”

“Quite another thing, Sir—quite
“another thing, I assure you. The
“principles of a religion may be
“good, though the practice of its pro-
“fessors be reprehensible.”

“I allow it, doctor—but my study
“has been confined rather to men,
“than books. I have travelled through
“the regions of paganism—I have dwelt
“among the followers of Mahomet;
“and must confess, have met with
“such instances of exalted virtue
“among them, as I never found
“equalled in the Christian world. Yet
“I know not a syllable either of the
“Vedum, or the Alcoran—I read only

“ the actions of mankind, and thence
“ my judgment is formed.”

“ You are partial, Mr. Addington—
“ you are partial. Would you take the
“ pains to examine the characters of
“ men in the Christian world, you would
“ find as good people there, as in Tur-
“ key or Persia.”

“ Even admitting it, doctor, for the
“ sake of the argument—yet, to evince
“ the superiority of your religion, they
“ ought to be infinitely better.”

The rector filled his pipe, and said—
nothing.

“ However,” continued the merchant,
“ to drop this subject, which I seldom
“ choose to converse on, I will give
“ you my sentiments in a few words.
“ Whenever I shall be convinced (which
“ I am far from being at present) that
“ there is more exalted virtue, and re-
“ fined morality, among Christians than
“ those whom they call infidels, I shall
“ not

“not scruple to allow it to be a divine
“dispensation.”

The doctor muttered something about infidels and heretics, and most devoutly elevating his hands, exclaimed, “And
“so bring them home, blessed Lord, to
“thy flock, that they may be saved
“among the remnant of the true Is-
“raelites,” &c.

“Amen,” added the justice, most emphatically.

Mr. Charles Addington was a gentleman of a most amiable character. He possessed a noble and princely soul, which was ever disposing him to the highest acts of munificence and generosity. There was an honest frankness in his manner, which interested one at once in his favour, and banished entirely that backward timidity, which is the bane of social confidence. Having been left at his father's death a very unequal portion of inheritance, he

had endeavoured to supply that deficiency of paternal regard, by an application to commerce; he had therefore followed the profession of a merchant from his youth, and, having realized a handsome fortune, was about to retire from business. Though in matters of religion he had taken the liberty to think for himself, yet nothing could exceed the extreme nicety of his ideas of moral rectitude. His knowledge of mankind rendered him rather averse to the contracting friendships; but whenever he had formed such an union, neither time nor circumstances had power to alter the steadiness of his attachment.

Nothing could be more diametrically opposite to such a character, than was that of the justice, his brother. With an understanding the most contracted, a mind clouded with the narrowest prejudices, and the meanest passions, this
man

man had artfully contrived to pass on the world for a person of the best principles, and most exemplary piety, though in reality his warmest devotions were paid to the shrines of Plutus and Venus: for he was at once a miser and debauchee. But nature having endowed him with a plentiful share of low cunning, which so often passes on the world for solidity of judgment, he had ingeniously concealed these traits of character, and, by dint of stated devotion, fasting, and some annual donations to the poor, passed for a very good kind of man.

The merchant, though not wholly a stranger to his brother's real disposition, was yet unacquainted with that masterly piece of address, by which he had been bequeathed by his father the small sum of two thousand pounds, while the justice became inheritor of at least eighty thousand. But as we are

in possession of that anecdote, we conceive it will be no breach of charity to give it to the reader.

John Addington, Esq. whom we now distinguish by the honourable appellation of the justice, was a youth of grave deportment; which served to conceal the thousand ill qualities he really possessed; but this veil, flimsy as it was, the eye of parental affection never penetrated; while the ingenuous and warm temper of Charles, rendered him entirely careless of concealing some inadvertencies of youth, which, contrasted with the extreme prudence of John, gave him considerable disadvantages in the opinion of his father. — Charles was liberal and beneficent, and, by the frequent donations he bestowed on indigent merit, often reduced his finances to a state of bankruptcy. These circumstances his brother never failed to improve to his own advantage,

mak-

making the old gentleman believe these sums were all squandered in extravagance and licentiousness.—Charles either knew not of his brother's treachery, or was of too high a spirit to endeavour a refutation of it. However, an event soon after happened which wholly deprived him of the little share he had hitherto possessed in his father's esteem.

There was in the village a tight lass, whose father was tenant to the old squire. John would frequently call in at the farm, and taste the good man's mellow ale. On such occasions he constantly gave the young woman, if she chanced to be present, the best maxims for her conduct in life; not unfrequently dropping hints of the treacherous arts used by *some* young fellows of his acquaintance. The old people concluded him a perfect paragon of sobriety; and frequently left him with their beloved Jenny, to inculcate his

lessons. Unluckily, it happened that poor Jenny's shape soon betrayed the subject of these conversations, and our young 'squire was involved in the greatest embarrassment on the occasion. His art, however, was not long before it suggested a most specious project. Whether by dint of love, or threats, is not precisely known, but he prevailed on his mistress to father her burden on the unsuspecting and innocent Charles. The scheme succeeded beyond their hopes. He was condemned unheard, and forbade to see his father, or even write to him more. The poor youth, without so much as knowing his supposed offence, went to London; where he was received into a merchant's accounting-house. His father dying soon after, he retired with the small pittance he had left him to Bengal; where he, in a course of years, realized a plentiful fortune. This circumstance, together
with

with his being still unshackled by matrimonial bands, procured him the most friendly reception from his brother, who hailed his return to his native land with a joy that was certainly as sincere as it was ardent. But we shrewdly suspect, that sensation had been felt in a far inferior degree, had not Fame, with her officious clarion, founded the report of the merchant's wealth, long before he himself arrived.

CHAP.

CHAPTER II.

TENDER FEELINGS IN A PARSON.

“THE supper is served up, gentlemen,” said the footman.

At this summons, they all three retired to the parlour; where Miss Addington was waiting their arrival.

“You shall stay supper, doctor,” said the justice—the rector needed not a reiteration—a fine boiled turkey, with oyster-sauce, most invitingly seconding the invitation.

The grace was not long. Doctor Hanham mortally hated all obsequious ceremonies, except it was at a patron’s levee—The justice thought the grace too short; but he had not his eye fixed on the turkey.

Miss Addington, desiring the merchant to help her to something on the table, took notice of a ring on his
little

little finger—"Pray, my dear brother," said she, with true female curiosity; "may I ask whose fair tresses adorn that crystal?"

"A favourite lady's," said the justice, doubtingly.

"No, really brother,—it was a favourite gentleman's"—the justice's countenance brightened.

"I have thought it very extraordinary," cried Miss Addington, "that my brother has never married."—Now this was one of those manœuvres made in conversation with a view to discover the sentiments of a person; and which generally effect that point, much better than a simple interrogatory could do—with Miss Addington, it meant, strictly translated—"I hope you *never* design to marry."

"Perhaps," rejoined the rector, who then, for the first time, disengaged his
eye

eye from his plate; "the gentleman
"thinks too meanly of matrimony."

"Really, doctor, I believe I think too
"highly of it."

"Oh pray, brother, give us your
"sentiments," cried Miss Addington,
"I should like of all things, to hear an
"old bachelor's idea of matrimony."

"Briefly then," replied he, smiling,
"I conceive the marriage state to be
"capable of the highest degree of felicity,
"that human nature can possibly attain;
"but, as you ladies, my dear sister, are
"so seldom assiduous to cultivate the
"qualifications necessary to that end,
"I have never dared to risk a con-
"nection of the sort."

"I hope, however," returned she,
laughing; "it is only to a sister you
"would be thus explicit."

At that instant the footman informed
Doctor Hanham, that a neighbouring
farmer had been thrown from his horse;
and

and as it was expected he could not live many hours, had desired the doctor to attend him.

"'Tis really unlucky just at this time," said the rector, still continuing to eat as if totally unconcerned—"let them know I am coming."

"Let me send you a bit of hare, doctor," said Miss Addington. 'Twas favoury meat which the good rector, as well as the old patriarch, loved; and he thought it not amiss to taste it, previous to bestowing the requested benediction.

"Heavens!" cried the merchant, in the utmost astonishment. A second messenger arrived—"The man is dying."

"I'll eat this jelly," said the doctor, "and then I'll go."

After he had sufficiently shewed his approbation of the desert, he rose with reluctance—reached his hat with no very hasty motion, and was just going out
of

of the room, as a footman entered to tell him, the farmer was dead.

The merchant started with emotion from the table—took a turn across the room—sat down—beat a tune with his fingers—“By heavens,” cried he, “a Muffelman would have done better!” “What’s the matter, Mr. Addington?” said Doctor Hanham, with all the nonchalance imaginable.

CHAP.

CHAPTER III.

INFORMATION FROM A CHAMBER-MAID.

MISS Addington, though on the wrong side of thirty-five, had still enough of beauty left to constitute her a very agreeable woman. A certain air of vivacity in her manner, which, together with the charms of thirty thousand pounds in her own possession, rendered her so interesting an object in the opinion of the other sex, that she was seldom without her admirers; but she had hitherto preferred superintending her brother's family, rather than to become mistress of one of her own. The justice, on his part, was so well satisfied with his sister's economical abilities, that he would have been extremely sorry to have parted with so excellent a manager; for in his estimation these talents were sufficient
to

to compose the whole of female worth. In one point, however, they widely disagreed. He, as has been before intimated, was a rigid devotee—a strict observer of the ceremonial part of religion, she, on the contrary, delighted in ridiculing whatever had the appearance of seriousness, and seldom missed an opportunity of placing the austere piety, which her brother affected, in the most contemptible light.

Passionately fond of admiration, and doating on the pleasures of the town, Miss Addington but barely existed, during those months she was compelled to pass in the country. No lover of literary pursuits—without a taste for such rural pleasures as the country affords, she was forced to descend to the mean gratification of village scandal, to support a three month's tedious residence at the Hall.

For

For the sake of charity, good reader, we will suppose the same, or some such motive, to actuate every fair lady who is capable of dealing in detraction; and not harshly admit human nature to be so depraved, as really to feel pleasure in murdering reputations. Yet then, as so many better remedies for killing time may be easily acquired, it is actually a pity. But what have we to do with these reflections—our business being only to record events, from which such lessons may be deduced as suit the reader's leisure or fancy?

Betty, perfectly well knowing her lady's disposition, never failed to collect for her amusement, as many anecdotes as she could possibly pick up among the rustic neighbours. She was not indeed always scrupulous to weigh them in the balance of truth, or even probability—it was sufficient for her, that she

she retailed them with only a few exaggerations of her own.

“La, Ma’am,” said this intelligent attendant, as she was one morning with her lady in the dressing-room, “how
“unfortunate for poor Miss Wilton!”

“And who is Miss Wilton?”

“Doesn’t you remember, Ma’am, the
“Presbyterian parson, who lived at the
“farther end of the parish? He is
“dead, and all the place is in tears for
“him. He was, to be sure, very well
“beloved—vastly kind and charitable.
“Why, he would go and see any poor
“person, whether they went to church
“or to meeting—aye, and give them
“money if they were sick; and that’s
“more than one can say of Dr. Han-
“ham, though he is a rich man.”

“Well; but what of the daughter?”
cried the lady, peevishly, not much re-
lishing the panegyric style.

“Why,

"Why, I say, Ma'am, as how she is
"to be pitied; for now her father is
"dead, she is left pennylefs, as one
"may say—and a pretty young woman
"she is!"

"Oh, she is pretty!—that is, in your
"eye, Mrs. Pert. But I suppose,"
(sarcastically) "if she is so pretty, she
"will not be long pennylefs—eh?"

"To be sure, Ma'am," returned the
confidante, who found she had mistaken
her theme—"to be sure I am no judge
"of beauty. They say Mrs. Stanley
"will take her, till she marries."

"Marries! Why who has she got
"for a lover?"

"La, Ma'am—Mr. Hartly, to be
"sure—they are just going to be mar-
"ried." —By the way, the latter part
of this speech was an illustration, which
Betty probably thought the intelligence
required.

"Ned

“Ned Hartly! my father’s ward.—
“He going to marry a girl without a
“shilling! ’Tis well. I will, however,
“take care his guardian shall prevent
“it.”

“I can’t say for that, Ma’am; but
“I believe he is desperately in love; he
“does nothing, but make verses about
“her for ever.”

“Make verses!—why pray did you
“ever see any of them?”

“Oh yes, Ma’am; for the last time
“Mr. Hartly was here, as he took out
“his pocket handkerchief, he drop-
“ped a paper. I thought it might be a
“love-letter, and so I slid it into my
“pocket as he was looking another
“way.”

“Dexterously perform’d, child;—but
“let me see it instantly.”

Betty, opening a little filk housewife,
took out the paper; which Miss Ad-
dington eagerly snatching out of her
hand,

hand, found it contained the following lines.

IMPROMPTU.

Sophia, when I view thy face,
Thy modest step—thy easy grace;
I think I see a goddess move,
'Tis Venus' self, the queen of love.
But when you speak, my ravish'd ears
Imbibe the music of the spheres;
Each word conveys instruction new,
And all Minerva speaks in you.

"Very finetruely," exclaimed Miss Ad-
dington, colouring—"Oh Betty I shall
expire with laughing—ha, ha, ha!"

It is supposed that nature, when she
endowed her favourite man with risible
faculties, intended laughter should be
an unequivocal symptom of mirth.—
The dame, it seems, is outwitted;
for we can set her laws at defiance;
nothing being more easy than to laugh
heartily, at the very moment we feel
most uncomfortably.—'Tis certain, that
however

however diverted Miss Addington affected to be at the perusal of the paper, she experienced sensations of a very different kind; and could not reflect on the partiality of Hartly to Sophia, without wishing he had placed it elsewhere.

Luckily for the relief of her chagrin, a female neighbour was announced.—This visitant was of the class of antiquated virgins, and amply possessed of all the appendages of the character; such as narrowness of sentiment, unbounded curiosity, and a never-dying passion for scandal.

“ Good morrow, my dear Miss Addington—I have brought my work, intending to chat half an hour with you.”

“ You could not possibly, my dear Hooper, have come more opportunely. Bet has been making me so melancholy, with an account of poor Mr. Wilson’s death.”

Miss

Miss Hooper's eyes in an instant glistened with tears—not that her heart was composed of softer stuff than persons of that description usually are; nor yet that she felt any extraordinary compunction at the time—it was merely a trick she had acquired—a good convenient habit of commanding tears whenever she thought proper, though the heart at the same time had nothing to do with them.

“His daughter,” continued Miss Addington, “is left destitute—is it true “she is so handsome as reported?”

“For my part,” returned the other, “I could never think her so—there is “nothing in her to be admired in the “least.”

“Really—but what induces this Mrs. “Stanley to adopt the girl?” Here Miss Hooper assumed one of those mysterious smiles, which express an uncharitable

furnish a thousand times more forcibly than a positive affirmation.

"Oh, I understand you," cried the quick-sighted Miss Addington, "I see how it was—Mr. Wilson and Mrs. Stanley—was it not so"—with a significant shrug of the shoulders.

"You take me, I see—consider, my dear Miss Addington—a woman with an income, that to my knowledge is very small, to take the charge of a girl wholly upon herself—do you think it probable, except there had been something of that sort between her and Mr. Wilson?"

"Every rational person must conclude it so—but, dear Hooper, have you heard that Ned Hartly pays his addresses to the minx?"

"I have heard so, it is true—but cannot believe Hartly would be so weak—he may flatter the girl perhaps, but
" he

"he certainly knows better than to
"marry her."

"So I should hope," returned Miss
Addington.

Company coming in, put an end to
the *tete a tete*, and the conversation be-
coming general, Mrs. Stanley's character
escaped any further malicious inuendoes
for the present; for scandal is of that
nature, that, like the mole, it works only
in the dark, and commits its depreda-
tions the most remote from observa-
tion.

CHAPTER IV.

AN EXAMINATION OF THE HEART.

AS soon as Miss Addington found a
convenient opportunity, she brief-
ly acquainted her brother of Hartly's
attachment to Sophia. The justice
heard her with a good deal of uncon-

cern, and then coolly asked, who the girl was.

“ Oh, an idle huffey, that has lounged
“ on her father’s small income, when
“ she ought to have been earning bread
“ at her needle.—If Ned marries her
“ he is ruined.”

“ I can’t help it,” said his worship,
with much sangfroid—“ I have done
“ what I could for the boy, if he ru-
“ ins himself ’tis not my fault—I shall
“ not trouble myself about the matter.”

The merchant, who had been taking
a nap in the elbow chair, asked who
the lad was, they had been speaking
of.

“ A son of old Hartly, who lived at
“ the manor,” replied the justice, “ you
“ surely recollect him.”

“ I do—he was a worthy man—he is
“ dead then?”

“ Yes, and left a son under my guar-
“ dianship. As we had always been on
“ friendly

“friendly terms, I undertook the charge,
“but it is an office I am not fond of.”

“In what circumstances did his father
“leave the young man?”

“Very indifferent ones. You knew
“how obstinately he resented the least
“infringement of his rights; and the
“frequent law suits in which he was
“necessarily engaged, enabled him to
“leave but barely sufficient to settle the
“lad with an attorney at the next town.”

“My poor old friend,” exclaimed the
merchant, “I must see his son—does he
“not often visit here?”

“Yes, yes—I love him as a child of
“my own.”

Here we intreat his worship's pardon,
if we notice some small mistakes which
the above assertions may probably betray
the reader into, if not timely corrected.
In the first place, though Hartly's father
had unfortunately been engaged in some
expensive suits, yet, at his death, he was
C 3 possessed

possessed of sufficient to settle his son comfortably in life. But the upright guardian, after disbursing the settled premium to the attorney, with whom young Hartly was placed, took the liberty of pocketing the residue, as a reward for his trouble: a sum not exceeding three thousand pounds, or thereabout. Secondly, in reply to the merchant's question, he had insinuated the frequency of Hartly's visits at the Hall; but the truth was, that he, poor lad, who possessed a great share of sensibility, had observed himself so coolly treated when there, that he almost wholly forebore his visits; nor did his worship trouble himself with enquiries as to the cause of it.

Though the information the merchant had received to his interrogatories, tolerably well satisfied him, it by no means suppressed his desire to see the son of a gentleman he had once known and honoured.

honoured. A few days after, as he was taking his usual solitary walk, a genteel youth advanced to the stile he was about to pass: there was something in his air expressive of that valued friend, and, on a nearer view, the merchant was convinced it could be none other than the young man he so ardently wished to see.

"Pray Sir," said he, respectfully advancing, "is not your name Hartly?"

"The same, Sir," returned the youth, bowing.

"Then you are the son of a gentleman for whom I had the most perfect esteem. Mr. Hartly," (taking his hand with the air of a long known friend) "I rejoice to see you."

Hartley surveyed him with a mingled look of surprize and pleasure, and before he had time to articulate a reply, the merchant went on thus:

"You do not know me—no, you were a child when I left England,

“and can have no recollection of my
“person—my name is Charles Ad-
“dington. Your dear father knew me
“well.”

At mention of his father, Hartly's eyes glistened—he could only press the merchant's hand.—That pressure, gentle as it was, spoke more than words. The merchant perfectly understood it.

“Hartly,” continued he, “I will be
“your friend.”

The youth had by this time recovered sufficient command of voice to thank him, in terms at once grateful and polite.—The merchant, whose penetration gave him a ready insight to the human heart, was convinced the lad deserved his esteem.

“Do you like the study of the law?” said he, after some moments pause.

Hartly hesitated—in reality he did not like it at all.—He was a youth of
brilliant

brilliant parts, and lively imagination; he therefore found it much too dry a pursuit for the fire of his genius.—

“There are professions, Sir, which I could have preferred; but resolution will conquer this aversion—and I trust,” added he, his eyes sparkling and with a certain air of animation, “I trust, I shall one day be enabled, by the practice of it, to soar above an abject dependence.”

The merchant applauded his spirit, and then proceeded to question him, respecting the intelligence he had acquired at the Hall.

“I am sorry to find, my dear lad, that your affections are unhappily placed on an object not altogether deserving them.”

Hartly’s face was instantly in a glow; but he replied with honest indignation.

“ Miss Wilton, Sir, is worthy the affections of an emperor, and had I an imperial crown——”

“ You would lay it at her feet,” interrupted Mr. Addington; “ but, my dear Hartley, this is the language of a brainish youth—not what I could have expected from the son of my friend.”

“ Sir,” returned Hartley, somewhat calmer, “ you must have been misinformed respecting that young lady—her character and connection are as unexceptionable as her personal accomplishments.”

“ But she has no fortune, and *that* alone ought to be an insuperable objection with one in your circumstances.”

“ True, Sir, Miss Wilton has no fortune; and I should do her the highest injury did I seek to engage her hand in my present situation.—No—I would
“ scorn

“scorn to ally the woman I love to indigence and distress.”

“Then you will give up all thoughts of her, my good lad.”

“Not, Sir, while she permits me to hope that I am not wholly disagreeable to her—no, not for a diadem, believe me—fortune may yet smile.”

“Silly boy,” cried the merchant, in a tone of displeasure. However he suffered the subject to drop for the present, and after injoining Hartly to see him as often as possible, bade him adieu.

CHAPTER V.

THE BENEVOLENT MIND.

ONE evening, as the justice was returning from a visit at the rectory, he perceived Hartly coming out of a small neat dwelling, and accosted him with—

C 6

“How

“How do you do, my lad?”

This unexpected meeting with his guardian, was a little *mal a propos*, in his opinion; however, he returned the salute with a tolerable grace, and was hastening away as fast as possible. But curiosity once excited is not easily repressed. The justice felt a strong inclination to learn the occasion of his visit at that place.

“Who lives in that pretty house, Ned?”

Hartly, a good deal disconcerted, replied, “It was the residence of the late Mr. Wilson, Sir.”

“Hah!” exclaimed his worship, with a significant smile, as much as to say, have I caught you then? “and so, Hartly, you have been to condole with the fair mourner, I suppose.”

Hartly was silent.

“Come, you shall introduce me to the lady.”

“Excuse

“Excuse me, Sir, Miss Wilson is, I believe, rather averse to company at present.”

The hesitation with which this was uttered, diverted the justice extremely. “No matter,” he replied, “I will introduce myself.” And then very politely entered the house, sans ceremonie. Sophia, dressed in deep mourning, was reclining on a sofa, dissolved in tears. A miniature picture of her father lay by her side, she took up, kissed it, and wept alternately. Never had the justice beheld so interesting an object. Sophia Wilson was about the age of eighteen, her form extremely elegant, and her face was all that could be conceived of finished beauty; the sable tincture of her dress, and her fine dark hair, falling in ringlets on her graceful shoulders, heightened the snowy whiteness of her complexion. The profound sorrow in which she was involved had indeed

indeed clouded the native brilliancy of her eyes; but she appeared altogether so irresistably lovely, that the justice had been some moments in the room before he had spoken a single syllable, nor did the lovely mourner perceive his approach, so intensely was she contemplating the dear resemblance of her beloved father. Upon looking up, she started with surprize, but soon recollecting the person of her worshipful neighbour, she arose, and with a graceful curtesy entreated him to be seated.

“ Miss Wilson I presume — I beg
“ pardon, Madam, for my intrusion,
“ but the loss you have sustained.” —
Sophia’s tears flowed afresh — “ I say,
“ Madam, the loss you have sustained
“ induced me to pay my compliments of
“ condolance---and---and---”

“ I am obliged to every one for their
“ friendly sympathy,” returned Sophia,
infinitely amazed at this visit; for her
father,

father, she well knew, had been extremely obnoxious to the justice, for no other reason, we believe, than that he was a Dissenter from the established church, or, in the stile of his worship and his friend the rector, a schismatic; and they both held it necessary to despise whatever was not, according to their ideas, sound orthodoxy.

“Do not weep, Miss,” continued the justice, “we must all die, and you shall not want a friend;” (significantly shaking his head) “you shall not indeed.”

Sophia expressed her obligations by a bow, for her heart was too full to suffer her to speak.

“Support your spirits, my pretty one,” tapping her on the cheek, “for my part, I rejoice to heal the broken hearted. I believe” (with an air of conscious triumph) “it is a part of my character.” “And an amiable one it is,”
“Sir,”

“ Sir,” said Sophia. “ Accept my thanks
“ for your friendly condescension, they
“ should be better expressed, but——”

“ I never require thanks, Miss Wilson,
“ for the favours I confer,” resumed
the hypocrite, and then, with reiterated
protestations of friendship, he took
leave.

Sophia's grateful heart was expanded
with the most satisfactory emotion at
this instance of friendly attention, from
a quarter she had least expected it. The
meditations of his worship, as he went
home, were certainly not less agreeable,
though of a different kind. The
charms of Sophia had awakened feelings
in his breast in no wise favourable
to poor Hartly, whose attachment to
her, he determined at all events to dis-
approve, and even to annihilate, if it
was in the power of art itself to accom-
plish that measure. It then occurred
to him, for the first time, that Hartly
ought

ought to be sent to London, in order to establish himself in the world. The country, he thought, was no place for a young fellow to make his fortune, though, perhaps, but an hour before he cared not a sou whether the poor lad should ever be in a way of making one at all. As to Sophia, when Hartly should be out of the way, it might be easy to manage the point with her. A young creature, elegantly brought up, and thrown on the world without a shilling—there *could* be no difficulty. Full of these cogitations the justice returned to the Hall, where, however, he did not judge it proper to mention a word of the visit he had paid.

The same evening Sophia received a visit from Mrs. Stanley, who, full of the benevolent project she had formed, was impatient to disclose it to the amiable object of her friendly concern.

“ I have

“ I have a little scheme in my head,
“ my dear Miss Wilton,” said she, as
soon as the usual compliments had
passed. “ Could you like to reside with
“ an old woman?”

“ What do you mean, Ma’am?” re-
turned Sophia, anxiously. “ That you
“ shall live with me, my dear, if you
“ please. You know I have no children,
“ and a comfortable income, which,
“ though not large, is sufficient to sup-
“ port us both. I will, therefore,
“ adopt you as my child—your com-
“ pany will enliven my retirement,
“ and who knows but when sickness or
“ old age shall demand the aid of filial
“ tenderness, my dear adopted daughter
“ will smooth my couch of languish-
“ ment.”

“ Oh, Madam,” cried Sophia, falling
on her knees, and pressing the hand of
that worthy lady, “ you are an angel,
“ sent

“ sent by a kind Providence to console
“ my aching heart.”

“ But do you approve the proposal?”

“ Approve it, Madam! how is it pos-
“ sible for me to express the grateful
“ sense I have of it? Ah, where should
“ a poor orphan have found a proper
“ asylum had not heaven inspired you
“ with the benign design?”

“ Well, then the plan is settled,”
returned Mrs. Stanley, tenderly pressing
her to her bosom, “ adjust your affairs
“ as soon as possible, and leave this
“ house of sorrow; by the end of the
“ week I think you could remove to
“ my habitation.”

As soon as Mrs. Stanley had taken
her leave, Sophia fell on her knees, and,
in a transport of gratitude, adored the
divine Disposer of events, for an in-
stance of generosity so unexampled and
unlooked for. When she retired to rest,
a kind of irresistible impulse led her to
the

the chamber, where her father had breathed his last. She approached the bed; she sunk down at the side of it; a gush of tears relieved her swelling breast. "It is your virtue," she cried, "dear and honoured author of my being—it is your virtue, which draws down blessings on your child—sweeter than incense it rises to heaven, and engages the care of a superintending Providence. Your tomb shall be the altar on which I will offer my grateful sacrifice, the sacrifice of a heart overflowing with a sense of its blessings."

In these tender effusions of sensibility and filial affection, Sophia might be said to have surpassed "the visible diurnal sphere." She was all soul, and doubtless would have passed the night in these painfully pleasing reveries, had not Sally entered the room, and prevailed on her young mistress to take that repose she so greatly stood in need of.

C H A P.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FORMAL VISIT.

“ I AM extremely concerned,” said the justice, one morning at breakfast, “ at this idle connection of Hartly’s — something must be done to break it off.”

“ It will scarcely be practicable,” replied the merchant.

“ Is the girl then so very enchanting?” cried Miss Addington, peevishly.

“ I have been thinking,” resumed the justice, “ to send Hartly to town — a youth of his parts should not be confined to the country.”

“ And what,” said the lady, “ will he effect there, brother, without a fortune? You had better, I should think, contrive to send the
“ girl

“ girl out of his way—he may then be
“ brought to see the impropriety of
“ such a foolish attachment.”

“ I agree with my brother,” added
the merchant, “ Hartly appears to be
“ a youth of genius, and if he could
“ be well settled in London, might
“ soon be in a way to make a fortune—
“ but what, alas! can a young man do
“ without friends or money?”

“ He must do as well as he can,” re-
turned the justice, a little fretfully—
“ but here I am resolved he shall not
“ remain. As for the girl, I hear she
“ has been well educated.”

“ Then I pity her,” rejoined the
merchant—“ for the evils of poverty
“ fall with aggravated force on refined
“ minds.”

“ Most true,” returned his worship,
“ and therefore, sister, I think it would
“ be a charitable act in you to afford
“ her an asylum. Could you not em-
“ ploy

“ ploy her in some easy office in the
“ family ?”

The merchant's looks gave his brother a thousand commendations.

“ Why, by your description,” cried Miss Addington, “ she is quite unfit to
“ be a waiting maid—I have no no-
“ tion of employing your people of
“ refined feelings—I should really be
“ afraid to issue a command, lest it
“ should shock the lady's sensibility.”

This reply was uttered in so sarcastic a tone, that it would have been no difficult matter to have defined its motive, had not the justice been too much offended at the refusal, to have marked the particular accents in which it was delivered.

The merchant heard nothing of it, all his thoughts being wholly engrossed in devising a plan for Hartly's future settlement in life. At last he had suggested one which promised much success,

cess; and, impatient to reveal it to Hartly, he took up his hat, and walked out for that purpose.

Miss Addington, fearing she had seriously offended her brother the justice, which she by no means judged it prudent to do, told him she had considered what he had hinted, and would call on Miss Wilson, and acquaint her with the proposal.

As the Hall was not very distant from Sophia's dwelling, Miss Addington went thither immediately. The servant girl, without the formality of announcing a visitor, precipitately introduced her into the parlour, where Sophia was sitting at her tambour frame, with Hartly reading by her side.

We apprehend this sight was not perfectly pleasing to the lady;—it was some time before she could assume that apparent ease she wished at the present instant to possess;—but recollecting

lecting that the lovers would probably enjoy but few more such delicious tete-a-tetes, she became tolerably composed, and chatted with her accustomed ease and vivacity.—It was not a proper time to disclose the purport of her visit; she therefore contented herself with telling Sophia, that she should be glad to see her at the Hall, on particular business, as soon as convenient.

When Miss Addington had retired, Sophia gently chid her lover for his non-politeness to that lady;—to say truth he was a little too regardless of those ceremonies, which are current in the fashionable world, though the heart has nothing to do with them:—he detested vice or meanness, whether it appeared in a male or female character, nor could even his deference for the sex, induce him to affect the semblance of respect for any one, in whom he knew these qualities resided.

But Hartly had hitherto been the pupil of Nature alone. "I did not know, Sophia," said he, "that you had been acquainted with Miss Ad-dington."

"Nor have I ever been, Hartly," she replied—"I really cannot account for the honour of this visit."

"Surely," he rejoined, "she could never hope to find food for scandal here."

"Fie, Hartly—how can you speak so severely?"

"Indeed, my dear Sophia, you would not accuse me thus, if you knew that lady's character as well as I do."

"Well, let us say no more of it—I will impute this visit at least to a more laudable motive."

"Amiable candour," cried Hartly, imprinting a tender kiss on her hand that was soft as the cygnet's down—

"but

“ but tell me, Sophia, when do you
“ go to Mrs. Stanley’s ?”

“ Next Saturday, Hartly.”

“ That good lady will permit me
“ sometimes to visit you,” said he, with
an air of anxiety mingled with hope.

“ Doubt it not, Hartly—she has
“ been acquainted with our connec-
“ tion from its early commencement
“ —she perfectly well knows how
“ agreeable it was to both our fathers
—“ but indeed,” added she with a
smile, “ I must not permit you to be
“ idle—you forget that Mr. W——
“ doubtless expects you in the office.”

“ Oh what a transition,” exclaimed
he, as he reluctantly took up his hat
to depart.

Surely, Sophia, 'twould a Job provoke,
To pore all day o'er Lyttleton and Coke,
Or scribble parchment in a formal letter,
When love's soft themes wou'd suit my taste
much better.

“Go, go,” cried she smiling — “you are a strange creature!”

Sophia being naturally of an active disposition, and extremely assiduous in any thing she took in hand, had soon adjusted her affairs, and the Saturday following, Sally conveyed her trunks, &c. to the house of Mrs. Stanley.— At this hospitable mansion she was received with the warmest marks of affection;—that good lady omitted nothing that might banish restraint, and induce her fair companion to consider herself at home.—She took her hand, and with a kind of good-natured pride, shewed her the apartment she had got fitted up for her reception.

“It will remind you, my dear,” said she, “of the prophet’s room mentioned in the book of Kings; for, like that, it contains little more than a bed, a table, and a stool.”

How-

However, the furniture was all disposed in that simple elegance of style, which suited the refined taste of Sophia:—the bed was of white cotton fringed—the toilette prettily ornamented with artificial flowers, and the walls adorned with some excellent paintings.

“Here, my love,” said Mrs. Stanley, (leading her into a pleasant closet adjoining) “you will retire, when fatigued with the chit chat of narrative old age:—for your entertainment, as I know you like reading, see,” (pointing to a handsome book case) “I have procured you some friends, the brilliancy of whose discourse will make up for the dulness of mine.”

“My beloved benefactress,” cried Sophia, “how you overwhelm me with your goodness!—but indeed you must not conclude me so ungrateful, as to suppose I can ever tire in your com-

“pany;—do not, Madam, wound me
“again with expressions such as these.”

“Pardon me, my dear, (embracing
“her) if I have inadvertently made you
“uneasy—I know you are all that is
“good and amiable.—You perceive,”
continued she, wishing to wave a subject which had given pain to one she so entirely loved—“you perceive I have
“left the walls of this little apartment
“wholly unadorned—for I plainly foresee it will not be long e’er they are
“decorated with some elegant drawings of your own; and, for my part,
“I shall take a far greater pleasure in
“viewing the productions of your fine
“fancy, than in contemplating the
“works of the most eminent masters.
“Oh, my good friend, how partial does
“your benevolence render you! Believe me, Madam, if I ever wish to
“be extolled, it will be for the warmth
“of my gratitude to the best of women—
“men—

“ men — there I confess my ambition
“ catches fire.”

“ You must not, my Sophia, over-
“ rate the trifling favours I may confer,
“ —Remember the divine Milton tells
“ us, that

“ A grateful mind, by owing owes not.”

CHAPTER VII.

NO PLOT WITHOUT A CONFIDANTE.

SOME days had serenely glided away before Sophia recollected the invitation of Miss Addington. On mentioning it to Mrs. Stanley, that lady was of opinion she ought not to delay the visit. Accordingly, the next morning, she proceeded to the Hall, and was immediately ushered into the parlour, where Miss Addington was sitting with the

justice and the merchant. Those who recollect the etiquette which people of some rank deem it highly necessary to observe in their interviews with people of no rank, will not be surprized that Miss Addington did not rise from her seat at the entrance of one whose present situation she considered so vastly beneath her. The natural urbanity of the merchant rendered him one of the politest men in the universe. He instantly arose, and led Sophia to a chair; as for the justice, he judged it proper not to seem to have any recollection of her person. A behaviour so extraordinary, after the friendly stile in which he had addressed her in his late visit, extremely disconcerted her.

“ Miss Wilson,” said Miss Addington, with her usual hauteur, “ I pity the
“ situation to which I find you are re-
“ duced, and would wish to render you
“ any assistance in my power.”

Sophia

Sophia bowed—the merchant's eyes were riveted upon her. Is this, thought he, the young creature I have been taught to consider as undeserving the affections of Hartly? Good God! what elegance in her figure, what sensibility in her countenance, in air and manner so interesting. I can no longer disapprove his choice.

“If you chuse to accept a place in this family,” continued Miss Addington, “I will endeavour to provide you one. Can you get up small linen, child?”

Sophia, without replying to the interrogatory, answered, that she was infinitely obliged by her kind intentions, but at present she was happily situated with Mrs. Stanley. She then, soon after, with an air of inimitable grace, retired. The merchant attended her to the door, and bade her good morrow, with a look and accent that sufficiently expressed

how warmly he was interested in her favour.

The justice was extremely mortified at this disappointment of his scheme. He had pleased his imagination with the prospect of having under his own roof the lovely girl who had made so deep an impression on his heart, in which situation he doubted not of accomplishing whatever his base hopes had suggested.

“ I wish from my soul,” cried the merchant, “ that fortune had been kinder to these young lovers—they are certainly worthy of each other.”

Miss Addington bit her lip, and coloured excessively.

“ Mr. Wilson,” continued he, “ must have been an amiable character ; his death seems generally regretted.”

“ Yes,” returned the justice, peevishly, “ an heretical dog.—Why, Sir, he
“ was

“ was what my good neighbour, the
“ rector, calls an Arian.”

“ Whatever his speculative opinions
“ were, I am convinced he must have
“ been a person of excellent morals.”

“ That I deny—you may as well tell
“ me that a foul stream yields sweet
“ water.—Aye, I remember that is a
“ fine simile of the doctor’s—I am quite
“ of his opinion, that when a man holds
“ a belief which is contrary to sound
“ orthodoxy, he can never possess a
“ grain of merit.—An Arian, I detest
“ them!—No, Sir, though such an one
“ gave his body to be burnt, or bestow-
“ ed his goods to feed the poor, I could
“ not allow him to have charity, or
“ any one of the moral virtues.”

“ Then you and the doctor differ
“ widely from my sentiments, brother,”
returned the merchant, excessively hurt
at the contracted scale of these senti-
ments.

As soon as Miss Addington was alone she rang for her favourite Betty.

"This foolish affair," said she, "has ended fortunately at last. — Thou knewest the odd scheme my brother had suggested, of taking that frightful chit into the family. — Indeed I never would have consented to it, had it not been with the view of keeping her out of Hartly's way. — The boy will be ruined, that is certain."

"To be sure, Madam, it would be best to part them — and, to say truth, Mr. Hartly is too good for such a doll."

"He is well enough, I think, and if he must have been telling his love-tales, why, I should suppose" (drawing herself up, and looking in the glass) "there were others to whom he might have addressed them."

"If I was in your place, Ma'am," said the confidante, who now began more fully

fully to comprehend her mistress, "I
" would prevent the match at all
" events."

" Prevent it—sure thou dost not sup-
" pose it is any business of mine.—But
" what, Bet, could I do in the matter?"

" Why, Ma'am, urge his worship
" to send the young man out of the
" country."

" Young man—and why not young
" gentleman? Thou knowest he is *that*
" by birth, at least. —My brother,
" indeed, has talked of such a measure
" —but then, I suppose, they would be
" eternally scribbling to each other."

" Oh, as for that, I warrant he would
" soon be tired of writing. But, Ma'am,
" who do you think is come home?"

" Who?" impatiently.

" Farmer Brown's daughter from the
" great boarding school by London,
" and such a fright—they say her head
" will

“ will scarce go into a peck—and then
“ her hoop.”

“ Hoop! oh I expire at the thought.”

“ Yes, Ma’am, a hoop too—but the
“ farmer, I hear, made her take it off,
“ though sorely against her will.”

“ I positively, Bet, must see the crea-
“ ture, to have some diversion—go you;
“ and invite her to drink tea with me to-
“ morrow.”

“ Law, Ma’am! sure you but jest.”

“ I am serious; the country is so dull
“ that I want a new subject for ridicule.
“ —and, dost hear, call on Miss Hooper;
“ and tell her I must see her at the same
“ time.—She has charming talents for
“ satire—we shall have a delicious treat.
“ —Be sure, Bet, you do not forget
“ my orders.”

“ No, Ma’am,” said the confidante,
withdrawing.

CHAPTER VIII.

SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL.

ALTHOUGH we would on all occasions strenuously recommend the proper cultivation of the youthful mind, we cannot but lament the perverse ideas which some parents seem to entertain on the subject. For instance, let us suppose a harmless couple, bred in the lower walks of life, and employing the greatest part of their lives in scraping up a fortune; utterly disqualified themselves for instilling the rudiments of knowledge in the tender mind, the girl is suffered to remain in shameful ignorance till she attain the age of fourteen or fifteen years. Make your daughter a good house-wife, says Prudence, initiate her into the knowledge of domestic duties, and teach her to
move

move with respect and happiness in your own sphere. No, says Vanity, give her an education suitable to the fortune you are enabled to give her. And, accordingly, Miss is sent to a fashionable boarding school, where her companions are chiefly of genteel rank: here not a particle of useful knowledge is expected to be acquired. The mind at that period is most capable of impressions; it was a perfect vacuum before, but soon becomes the receptacle of pride, vanity, and affectation. If the young lady learns, as Shakespear expresses it,

“ To paint, to ogle, and nick-name heaven’s
“ creatures,”

the important end of education is answered. Do not you think, Ma’am, my daughter is wonderfully improved? is the interrogatory of my good dame; nor does she perceive her mistake till she finds her daughter utterly disqualified

fied for any of the amiable purposes of domestic life; incessantly pursuing her darling folly at the expence of sober happiness, perhaps of virtue too.

Mr. and Mrs. Brown were exactly the people we have described; plain, good kind of folks, who had acquired a handsome fortune by dint of long and laborious industry. Caroline, their only child, was a girl of a passable understanding, which, properly cultivated, would have rendered her a valuable woman. It may reasonably be conjectured her heart was not more improved than her head. Indeed it was the repository of every illiberal sentiment and ungenerous disposition. However, her character will fully appear in the course of these memoirs; and we think some little sketch of it may be discerned in the following breakfast scene.

Mr. Brown, looking at his watch. "Past
" ten o'clock—Caroline, Caroline, why
" do

“do not you come down to break-
“fast?”

Mrs. Brown. “Be quiet, Mr. Brown,
“she is coming as soon as she is
“dressed.”

Mr. Brown. “Dressed!—what a plague
“does the girl take so much time in
“dressing?—why, would not a clean
“night cap do?”

Mrs. Brown. “How silly you talk,
“Farmer Brown. Do you think Caroline
“has been so long at school to come
“down stairs in a night-cap at last?”

*Enter Miss Brown, genteely dressed in a
large French night-cap, bell-hoop, &c.*

Miss Brown. “Law, papa, what a
“noise you keep—you really have given
“me the head-ache.”

Mr. Brown. “Why, Carry, love, do
“not you think I want my breakfast
“after being out in the cold wind so
“many

“ many hours?—Come make the tea,
“ child.”

Miss Brown to her mother. “ Dear
“ madam, when will you set aside this
“ odious old-fashioned tea-pot, and get
“ one something more in the modern
“ style?—I can’t think (looking about
“ her with discontent) why we must
“ always breakfast in the kitchen; what
“ have we a parlour for?”

Mr. Brown. “ Kitchen, adzooks!
“ your mother and I should not have
“ picked up our money, if we had al-
“ ways sat in the parlour, let me tell
“ you.”

Miss Brown. “ But dear Sir, these
“ odious servants to sit close at one’s el-
“ bow — I protest the effluvia of their
“ broth makes me really sick.—Giles,
“ (*in an affected tone*) do for heaven’s sake
“ take those frightful nails out of your
“ shoes—they actually grate my nerves.”

Giles.

Giles. "So I will, Miss Carry, if you
" will find me in shoes—Ah, you did
" not find fault with my shoes, when I
" used to carry you in my arms about
" the fields."

Miss Brown. "Impertinent creature!
" thus it happens when one are obliged
" to converse with the canaille."

Mr. Brown. "Come, come, Giles is
" an honest servant, and has helped me
" to get many a guinea—you must not
" despise old Giles, my dear."

Miss Brown. "Despise him, papa—
" no—but then these people should be
" taught to keep their distance—well I
" know, if I am ever the mistress of a
" family, I will never sit down in the
" kitchen."

Mr. Brown. "Then you will never
" get as much money as your father,
" child—I promise ye."

Here a loud rap at the door sent Miss
Caroline hastily up stairs, for she would
on

on no account have been found in the kitchen. She was soon followed by her mother, who exclaimed as she entered the room — “Well, who should have thought it, Caroline—here is Miss Addington’s maid come to invite you to the Hall—’tis mighty strange, good luck.”

“Not strange in the least, Madam—your genteel people will always pay one proper respect—but is she in the parlour?”

“No, your father is talking with her in the kitchen.”

“Law, papa, is always so provoking.”

After shaking a little more powder into her hair, Miss Brown moved with suitable dignity down stairs, where Mrs. Betty delivered her lady’s message in due form. Caroline began to search for a card to return her compliments proper stile, but her father telling her,

her, that Mrs. Betty would not forget her answer, the waiting woman was suffered to depart, but not before the honest farmer had pressed her to taste his wife's cordial, which Miss Brown afterwards assured him was absolutely *outré*, and begged in future he would lay aside such vulgar customs.

In short, the fine-lady airs of Miss Caroline, often put the good man so much out of his way, that he began to feel very uncomfortably, and heartily to wish she had never been sent to a boarding-school. His furniture had undergone an entire alteration, not much to his satisfaction; nor we conceive to the taste of a discerning spectator, who would probably have thought the old-fashioned furniture far more suitable to the antiquity of the dwelling; which was an old ruined Gothic mansion, that two or three centuries ago had doubtless been the residence of the lord of the
the

the manor.—Upon entering the house, you were put in mind of a venerable statue on an old monument, habited in the dress of a modern beau.—The old oak table, which rivalled the polish of a mirror, was removed for a mahogany card table—the brass ornaments of the chimney piece were intermingled with china jars, and in the parlour was placed a modern stove; the small proportion, however, which it bore to the enormous size of the chimney corner, induced the shivering guest to wish again for the crackling faggot, and the blazing hearth. Miss Brown had strong objections to the best bedstead, but the farmer would by no means consent to its removal, it having been in the possession of his great grandfather, and was indeed a venerable piece of antiquity, as the Gothic figures on its massy pillars sufficiently evinced; all therefore that Caroline could effect, was
the

the hanging around it a set of elegant chints curtains.—The garden also was destined to sustain some marks of the young lady's taste—she insisted on having an alcove, but as her father would not consent to the demolition of the kitchen garden, which he wisely judged of the most utility, the approach to this modern pavilion was through a narrow alley, bounded on either side by leeks, coleworts, beans, &c. &c.—In short, wherever you turned an eye, striking marks of the ridiculous appeared; and even Theocritus, the weeping philosopher, could scarcely have restrained his risible faculties, had he beheld this laughable jumble of absurdity.

We may be certain Miss Brown did not fail of attending at the Hall on the appointed time, as little can it be doubted that her efforts were employed in decking out her person with all the ornaments of taste and finery.—As nothing
material

material happened in the course of the visit, we will pass it over—only observing, that Miss Hooper having also duly attended the invitation, that lady and Miss Addington enjoyed a most delicious evening after Caroline's departure, in expatiating on her dress, behaviour, and person ;—the latter being extremely plain, entitled her to a high degree of favour from both, and they determined on making her, whose abilities and acquirements they saw no reason to dread, one of their select parties.

It is absolutely necessary for those who would live at peace with the world, to be totally divested of any accomplishments either of mind or person, that are capable of attracting its envy ;—should the contrary be the case, let them not flatter themselves with the hope of quarter—such is their destiny—and the fates have said it, that

“ Be they as chaste as ice, as pure as snow,
“ They shall not escape calumny.”

They will be sure to meet with a Miss Hooper, whose breath (indeed that of Miss Hooper was not very agreeable, yet it was the fragrance of Arabia, compared to that which sometimes issued from her lips)—we mean the breath of scandal—like the deadly effluvia of a pestilence, discoloured every object on which it blew.

CHAPTER IX.

PROPOSAL FOR AN ASIATIC TRIP.

THE first time Sophia saw Hartly after her attendance at the Hall, she informed him of the proposal then made her.

“ You

“ You look surprized, Hartly,” added she—“ is there any thing so very strange
“ in this affair ?”

“ Yes, by heaven, my Sophia, there
“ is—to me ’tis passing strange, that
“ Miss Addington should be capable of
“ concerting the benefit of one, who
“ she must mortally hate for being her
“ superior in beauty—’tis inexplicable,
“ nor can I think the scheme entirely
“ her own.”

“ You forget, Hartly, that the com-
“ pliment you extravagantly pay me,
“ must, if it be a just one, reflect ho-
“ nour on the lady—go, go, you are
“ too severe.”

“ Believe me, Sophia, I had rather
“ you should suspect my judgment than
“ my candour ; and therefore I ask
“ Miss Addington’s pardon.”

“ Though you resolve to persist in
“ your sentiments of her,” said Sophia,
laughing—

“Do, my dear girl, oblige me with
“playing that sweet air you did the
“other day.”

“Can you enough shake off your
“spleen to sing?”

Hartly immediately hummed the first
couplet of

“If love’s a soft passion, &c.”

but his voice was accompanied with a
look of inexpressible tenderness.

“Very well,” cried she—“I see you
“are docile—reach me the guitar.”

In the midst of this scene of love and
harmony, who should pass by but Miss
Hooper? As they were sitting in an ar-
bour, she had a complete view of them
over the hawthorn hedge that bounded
the garden. The emotions she felt at
this discovery, resembled those betrayed
by Cain, when, as drawn by the pen
of Gefner, he painfully witnessed the
endearments of Abel and Thirza.—The
same

same day she repaired to Miss Addington, and informed her of the extreme imprudence of Mrs. Stanley, in permitting an idle young fellow to waste his time in so improper a manner, when he ought to be following his studies at home.

“Yes, yes,” returned Miss Addington, with a malicious sneer, “Mrs. Stanley’s is a most convenient meeting house on such occasions.”

It has been already observed, that the merchant was strongly prejudiced in favour of Sophia—he therefore took an opportunity of calling at Mrs. Stanley’s, with a view to acquire a further acquaintance with that amiable young lady; and also to learn something of her sentiments respecting Hartley, whose suit he was determined to promote to the utmost of his power.—When he entered the parlour, both the ladies were sitting at the work table. There

was a frankness in his address that banished at once all superfluous formality. — Sophia regarded him as a friend, to whom she might freely unfold the secrets of her heart, and she answered all his enquiries with an openness which greatly augmented his good opinion of her.

“Mrs. Stanley,” said he, “I confess I feel myself actuated by a kind of paternal regard for this young and unfortunate couple, and resolve on contributing all in my power towards establishing them genteely.”

Sophia’s face was covered with blushes — pretending to want something in the next room, she arose, and went out, chusing rather to hear the friendly sentiments of the merchant from the mouth of her friend, than to witness a conversation which could not but be painful to a mind so delicate as her own.

“Your

“ Your generous resolution, Sir,” replied Mrs. Stanley, “ does honour to
“ your feelings—I am convinced the
“ young people have a most refined affection for each other—it commenced
“ in their early youth, and received the
“ warmest sanction of both their parents—at that time indeed, old Mr.
“ Hartly thought the fortune he should
“ leave his son would be abundantly
“ sufficient for them both—when at his
“ death it appeared that his circumstances were so very indifferent. Mr.
“ Wilton, so far from deeming young
“ Hartly’s want of fortune an excuse for
“ prohibiting his visits to his daughter,
“ that, perhaps indeed with more generosity than prudence, he encouraged
“ the connection as much as ever; and
“ would often say, as they both knelt
“ before him, or sat on either side his
“ elbow chair—Fortune, my children,
“ has not done you justice—but Providence,
E 4 “ dence,

“ dence, I hope, will bless your union—
“ the comforts of life are attainable by
“ the hand of industry.”

The merchant was affected—he walked towards the window, and took a pinch of snuff.

“ They must—they shall be united,” said he warmly—“ ’twere impious to
“ part them. However, Mrs. Stanley, I
“ dare say you agree with me, that
“ their marriage must not take place,
“ till Hartly is in some view of an
“ establishment.”

“ Certainly I do,” she replied—“ and
“ I can assure you, Sir, that the young
“ folks have not the remotest intention
“ of so imprudent a measure.”

“ I am satisfied, Madam—it shall be
“ my care to effect something towards
“ it—mean time I am exceedingly re-
“ joiced, that the amiable Sophia has
“ met with so eligible an asylum as your
“ home will afford her. —Your gene-

rous

“ rous conduct, Madam, on this occasion, must inspire the admiration of every benevolent heart.”

Mrs. Stanley bowed, and Sophia coming into the room, they began chatting on different subjects.—After the merchant’s departure, Mrs. Stanley related what he had said, to that grateful girl, who could only express the sense she had of his goodness by her tears.

The justice, more than ever intent on separating the two lovers, resolved to give Hartly a severe lecture on the subject; and for that purpose sent him an invitation one day to dine with him.—On his arrival at the Hall half an hour before dinner time, he was received by his guardian with the utmost coldness—however, the friendly attention of the good merchant amply atoned for the mortifying indifference of his worship.—When the cloth was removed,

the justice began with much solemnity to harangue on the imprudence of early marriages, and proceeded to question Hartly, with much severity, respecting his attachment to Miss Wilson.—Hartly would gladly have been excused attending a lecture of that kind; yet, when thus called on to avow his sentiments, he thought it incumbent on him to declare them candidly and firmly.—He acknowledged his respect for Miss Wilson; a respect authorized by both their parents—that lady had condescended to receive his addresses, and, as long as she permitted him that honour, his best affections ever would be devoted to her.—As to fortune, 'twas true he could boast none, but he had youth, he had health; and would therefore, by the exertion of an honest industry, endeavour to obtain the means of their mutual support—nor did he doubt but Providence would favour his wishes.—He concluded

cluded by assuring his worship, that he esteemed himself restrained by every tie of honour, from soliciting the happiness of Sophia's hand, before fortune should have placed him in a situation to deserve it.

"Noble boy!" cried the merchant, charmed with the freedom and generosity of his sentiments.

Miss Addington smiled ineffable contempt—while the justice, highly displeased, told him he spoke only the language of romance—that his obstinacy would be its own punishment; and added, in a peremptory tone, that if he did not resolve to break off so foolish a connection, he would assuredly withdraw from him his *favour* and *affection*.

By the emphasis with which these two words were accompanied, a stranger would have supposed the young man had received some eminent marks of both—

both—we know of none, however, except the releasing him from the weight of about three thousand pounds, the remnant of his patrimonial inheritance, may be considered as such.

As soon as the justice had delivered the above menace, he withdrew, highly enraged. The merchant, taking Hartly into the garden, questioned him concerning his journey to the metropolis, which the justice intended should shortly take place.

The poor youth could draw no very sanguine expectations from the measure. He was about to be launched into the world; left to provide for himself, without friends, without money; it was an unpromising prospect. “But I will do what I can,” said he, firmly.

“You do not like the study of the law, I think, my lad.”

“Not passionately, Sir.”

“Should

“ Should you prefer a voyage to
“ India ?”

At the very mention of India, that mine of affluence, poor Hartly's heart bounded. In an instant he beheld his dear Sophia elevated to the height of Asiatic splendour; the idea diffused a gleam of transport over his countenance.

“ I perceive you would,” said the merchant, “ and will, therefore, write to
“ a friend in town, who has interest
“ enough I believe to procure for you
“ an appointment in the Company's
“ service.”

Hartly thanked him in the warmest terms, and retired elate with the most lively satisfaction.

The merchant performed all he had promised, and, by the assistance of his friend, soon obtained him a lucrative appointment. As the ships were not expected to sail before the expiration of
a couple

a couple of months, we will leave the hero of our tale to entertain his beloved Sophia with the flattering prospects that now opened to his view,

CHAPTER X.

THE DISASTER OF FOLLY.

MISS Addington, as has been said, having no reason to dread a rivalry either of wit or beauty in Caroline Brown, affected a most violent regard for her, and generally engaged her in all her familiar parties. It is needless to say how flattering such a distinction must be to a girl of Caroline's vanity; but it only served to place her foibles in a more ridiculous light, and furnish an exquisite fund of diversion to that satirical lady; too copious, indeed, to be confined to her own breast, and she, therefore,

therefore, generously contrived for as many of her friends as she could to have a share of it.

From this motive it was, that on a particular time, when a large party of the neighbouring gentry were expected to dine at the Hall, Miss Addington, to her brother's great astonishment, insisted that the Browns should also be invited. The merchant told her, that the proper selection of company was a point to which the mistress of a house should always scrupulously attend; "otherwise," said he, "you cannot expect to find a free and unrestrained conversation animate your table."

This observation, though undoubtedly a good one, had no effect on Miss Addington, who hoped to see the mirth of one part of the company enkindled by the embarrassment of the other, and, therefore, having got the justice's consent to what he called her odd whim,
a card

a card was dispatched that contained something to the following purpose.

Mr. and Miss Addington present compliments to Mr. Mrs. and Miss Brown, and entreat the favour of their company at a friendly dinner, Wednesday next. No excuses will be admitted.

Mr. Brown concluded they were invited to what the card literally expressed, *i. e.* a friendly dinner; and, as he had often smoked a pipe with the justice, did not hesitate to accept the invitation.—The intervening time was employed by Caroline in making the necessary preparations for so important a visit—and we will take the same opportunity to introduce to the reader part of the company that was expected at the Hall, it being impossible for us to find time for that ceremony when they shall be all assembled.

Sir George Wolmar and his lady, possessed a handsome seat a few miles distant

distant from the Hall—both your people of the ton—they were accompanied by their son, who was just returned from making the grand tour; and had done his country the honour to import a considerable share of foreign absurdity, by way of augmenting the vast stock she has for half a century been accumulating, through the industry of these her indefatigable children.

Mr. and Mrs. Forster, both truly well-bred people—the two Miss Ancrams, finished coquettes, and about half a score petit maitres. We ought more particularly to mention a Mr. Sydney, whom Cupid had sent on an errand to Miss Addington—no, reader, we mistook—'twas Plutus sent him, as we have been credibly informed; for as this gentleman had long depended on chance for a support, he concluded such a sum as that lady was possessed of would be a desirable acquisition. As for
the

the charms of a spiteful old maid, he thought they might be thrown into the scale, should there be an ounce or two deficiency in the weight of the metal.

The rector of course was among the number—for he would have thought it extremely odd to have been left out at a venison feast.

At length the day arrived—"the great" "the important day" on which Miss Brown was prepared to shine with amazing eclat. Mr. Brown, quite out of patience at the immoderate time appropriated to personal decorations, sat out before his wife and daughter; who, as soon as they were equipped, ordered Giles to draw up the carriage.

Now this carriage was a frightful old-fashioned single horse chair, that had occupied a solitary corner of a coach-painter's court yard during the period of half a score years, in which time it could never so far attract the
notice

notice of a spectator, as to induce him to enquire its price; till at last Mrs. Brown, at the earnest request of her daughter, purchased this curious vehicle.—The ravages of time were indeed rather conspicuous on its form, which a neighbouring carpenter had for some preceding days been employed in repairing.—He had brushed it over with a little redding, used at the farm for the purpose of marking sheep—the leather of the head had been oiled, and in short, the venerable machine made quite a spruce appearance.

Miss Brown walked to the stable, and singled out a long-tailed colt to draw it; but honest Giles assured her, that he would infallibly overset it, and strongly recommended old Bobadill, who had been long used to the plough, and had but one fault—that of being lame in the shoulder—except his heels being of an enormous size.—Bobadill was therefore

fore cropped and combed, when, oh sad to relate!—not a soul had once thought on the harness—none was therefore to be found. — Giles, whose heart was as much set on the business as that of his young mistress, undertook to remedy the matter; and accordingly, by the help of thongs, ropes, and the cart tackle, had confined the gay old beast to the chaise—the ladies ascended—off they sat, Jehu-like—whip and crack—but scarce had they gone five yards, when the triumphal car made an inclination to one side, for overset it could not, so circumscribed was the road by prodigious banks—but the wheel was broke to pieces. — “What is to be done?” cried Caroline to Giles, who trudged after—“sure never any thing was so “unlucky.”

“I have a thought,” returned the faithful ploughman—the wheel of our “dung cart will fit it exactly.”

“Heavens!

“Heavens! exclaimed she—do you think I would go to the Hall in such a disgraceful manner?”

“We can get out,” said her mother, “at the corner of the park, and so no one will see us.”

This thought reconciled the young lady to the measure—the cart wheel was brought up, and affixed to the chaise.

“Get up, Bobby,” cried Giles, pushing behind—“get up my old fellow.”

Up gets Bobby, and off they go once more.—Ye little Genii, be propitious!—fit some of you on the broad cart wheel on one side, and some of you on the chaise wheel on the other side—two or three get upon the ropes that they yield not—and be sure, observe the old thongs, that they do their duty.—’Tis done—and now—

Oh you bodiless beings—you forgot to notice old Bobadill, not a step further will he go.—“Get up, Bobby—

“whew,

"whew, whew," whistles Giles. —

"Hang me," cries Bobby, "if I stir
"a step"—

"Confound the old beast," cried Miss
Caroline, half mad with vexation.

"Whip him up," rejoined Mrs.
Brown.

"Laus, Mistress," returned Giles,
"you may as well beat upon our barn
"floor at home, as upon his hide."

"Come you, Tom, before," said Ca-
roline, "and lead the stubborn beast—
"and you, Giles, push the chaise be-
"hind."

Tom instantly took his place a-head,
and poor Giles was straining every
nerve astern, when a most immoderate
burst of laughter roused the attention of
the two ladies.

Could any thing have been more un-
fortunate?—Miss Addington had con-
ducted her company to a summer-house
at the very corner of the park next the
road,

road, from whence they had a full view of the cavalcade as it moved along.

“What the d—l comes here?” cried Sydney.

“Ma foy,” exclaimed the travelled beau, “that is the most elegant vehicle I have seen—the harness so charmingly diversified—by Jupiter, I will have my new equipage exactly after that model. Hah, hah, hah!”

Poor Caroline was dying with confusion—“Let me get out, for heaven’s sake,” cried she—but that was impossible, the lane being extremely narrow: they were therefore forced to proceed to the park gate, where, to her inexpressible mortification, the whole company had assembled—some declaring it was Venus in her Paphian car—“rather” said another, “it is Dulcinea del Toboso, drawn by Rosinante.”—An Irish gentleman swore, he would give fifty guineas to ride in such a machine,

chine, if he walked all the way.—In short, so profuse was the raillery on this occasion, that poor Caroline sunk under the extreme mortification her vanity had sustained — she absolutely fainted away—the gentlemen were all assiduous to convey her to a seat, where, though not one of the company could refrain their immoderate laughter, they, by the help of salts, &c. soon recovered her—but she had no sooner become sensible of what had passed, than she burst into tears of vexation.—“ Let us return home, Madam,” said she to her mother—“ I am too unwell to enjoy company ;” —and, notwithstanding the earnest entreaties of Miss Addington to the contrary, she sat out, and footed back the way she had so triumphantly passed before.—As for the farmer, he had heard nothing of the matter ; and concluding his wife and daughter were among the company, sat down very com-

composedly, and eat a hearty dinner at the side table with the rector and the Irishman.

CHAPTER XI.

HERO LAUNCHED INTO THE WORLD.

AT length the time arrived, when Hartly was to bid a long adieu to his beloved Sophia. — The afternoon preceding his departure he spent at the Grove—the conversation was not of that sprightly kind which used to prevail at these interviews—Hartly was pensive—Sophia's gentle heart foreboded a thousand gloomy apprehensions, and the good Mrs. Stanley participated in the concern of both. — The lovers took a walk after ten—it was a fine pleasant evening in the month of July—the lit-

the birds sung a requiem—the flocks were sporting their last gambols on the green—all nature appeared serenely beautiful.

Hartly endeavoured to dissipate the gloom which oppressed him. He forced a smile—hummed a tune—but it would not do—the gloom returned to his brow again—his spirits were depressed with a heaviness he had never felt before.—They rambled instinctively to the house where Sophia had lived with the tenderness of fathers—they looked over the hawthorn hedge—they beheld the garden overgrown with weeds—the wicket was open—they entered the court, and looking in at the window of the sitting parlour, saw the chimney corner where they had passed many a winter evening together, whilst Mr. Wilson sat by their side smoking in his elbow chair.—All was now desolate without an inhabitant—neither of them could articulate a word—

word—they sat down in the arbour—
'twas over-run with luxuriant branches
—Hartly plucked a honeysuckle—he
brought it near his eye to conceal the
tear that was just ready to trickle down
his cheek—Sophia fobbed——

“When I am a nabob,” said ~~he~~, en-
deavouring to divert her melancholy,
“I will purchase this sweet cottage.—
“I shall venerate it as much as the em-
“peror Titus did the habitation of his
“father, which, you know, he preserved
“in the midst of his splendid palace.”

“When you are a nabob,” reiterated
Sophia.

“And what decree of destiny, my
“dearest girl, declares I shall not be?”

“I am afraid, Hartly, you grow ava-
“ricious—Oh my friend, how dearly in
“my esteem would all the treasures of
“India be acquired, if but at the ex-
“pence of one of those fine feelings

“ which have hitherto animated your
“ heart !”

“ Amiable Sophia !—No, when I am
“ capable of loving gold for its own
“ sake, may I be despised by you — for
“ your sake alone, my sweet girl, I im-
“ plore the blessings of heaven on my
“ industry—to be enabled to raise the
“ woman I adore above the painfulness
“ of dependance; to exalt her to the
“ station her merit demands—oh, there’s
“ rapture in the thought !”

“ Generous Hartly !—but let us leave
“ this spot, where every thing con-
“ spires to heighten our melancholy sen-
“ sations.”

“ And do you then confess ?—does
“ my excellent Sophia confess some
“ tender regret at parting from her ever
“ faithful Hartly ?—Oh, you make me
“ too happy !”

“ And why, my friend, should I bor-
“ row the odious mask of dissimulation
“ to

“to conceal it?—rather, why feign an
 “insensibility which my heart is far
 “from feeling, and surely must con-
 “demn?”

Hartly was about to express his transports, when Sophia, rising from her seat, reminded him, that it was unkind to rob Mrs. Stanley of his company, who certainly regarded him with an affection little inferior to parental;—they therefore returned to the Grove, where that lady was waiting supper.—Hartly was in better spirits—Sophia strove to appear so likewise; and the conversation, though tender and interesting, was, in some degree, sprightly.—He delineated to Mrs. Stanley in a lively manner, the pleasing picture he had drawn of future affluence—then, with an air of satisfaction, touched on the aggrandizement of his dear Sophia as a necessary consequence.—We know not how long he would have pursued these agree-

able reveries, had not Mrs. Stanley interrupted them, by taking from her watch a miniature picture of Sophia.

“ I think, my dear, you shall present
“ this valuable resemblance to Hartly.”

Sophia was delighted with the proposal—she presented it to him with one of those looks which are only intelligible to congenial minds.

Hartly kissed the fair hand which gave it.—“ Precious gift !” he exclaimed — “ inestimable treasure ! — I will
“ wear it next my heart, which never
“ can feel an irregular sensation, whilst
“ this charming portrait is so near it.”

The clock then struck eleven—Mrs. Stanley remarked it—’twas a delicate mode of informing Hartly it was time to depart;—he understood the hint, but his soul lingered near its beloved object; yet the parting moment must arrive.—He knelt on one knee—kissed the hands of Sophia and Mrs. Stanley—breathed
a thou-

a thousand tender sighs—then rising abruptly, snatched up his hat, and left the room with the utmost precipitation.

Sophia seeing him departed, gave a loose to those soft emotions she had painfully attempted to suppress in his presence.—Mrs. Stanley was deeply affected.—There was something so odd in the manner of his departure, that they could scarcely forbear smiling at the recollection—both, however, agreed as to the propriety of the measure.

“There is something extremely distressing to feeling minds,” said Mrs. Stanley, “in that ceremony called taking leave—’tis a pang which tears the very heart strings of affection.—I approve Hartly’s mode—poor youth! I pity him—but be comforted, my Sophia; heaven will reward your mutual constancy.”

Sophia hid her sorrows in the bosom of her friend.—When she retired to rest, Hartly's idea never once quitted her imagination, and sleeping she still saw him amidst the wild incoherence of dreams.—As for him, he retired indeed to bed; but his spirits were too much agitated to permit him to repose. He arose early, and his little matters being soon adjusted, he went to the Hall, where he received an invitation to breakfast.—In the parlour he found the justice and the merchant—Miss Addington, for some reason or other, chusing that morning to breakfast in her dressing room.—The coffee was poured out, and while they were sipping it, his guardian gave him some serious exhortations to sobriety and diligence—to all which Hartly gave a respectful attendance.

Breakfast over, the justice took him aside; and after expatiating on the
care



care and trouble he had taken during the period of his guardianship, told him he would still be his friend if he behaved well.—Now the expression of behaving well, meant no more on the present occasion, than Hartly's entire renunciation of Sophia;—as to any other part of his conduct, his worship was not extremely solicitous.

“My chaise,” added he, “shall convey you to town, to save the expences—
“of carriage—and as I have a great regard for you, you shall not go destitute, though I am already out of pocket on your account.—There, my lad, is something for your acceptance.”

Most liberally presenting him with two guineas.

The merchant would have detested his brother's despicable parsimony, had he once suspected it—but measuring

his benevolence by the standard of his own, that idea never entered his head.— When Hartly returned to the parlour, he presented him with a small box sealed and locked, with an express injunction not to open it till he was on board. The truth was, he was apprehensive that its contents might have betrayed a youth of vivacity, who had never before seen the town, into a desire of tasting its dissipated pleasures.

The chaise drew up to the door—Hartly bowing respectfully, stepped into it—he put his handkerchief to his eyes—the carriage moved off.

We now behold a youth of genius, sensibility, and liberal education, launched on the world, with two guineas in his pocket. The sentimental reader will be apt to cavil at the partiality of fortune, who so often enables a wealthy blockhead, to squander in vice or folly
those

those fums, which, rightly applied, might have aided honest industry, or fostered the divine fire of genius.

As they were slowly ascending a steep hill, Hartly was roused from his melancholy reflections by the piercing groans of a female. He ordered the chaise to stop, and inclining his ear to the side from whence the sound seemed to proceed, he saw a boy of about five years of age, running to the chaise.

"Oh, my mammy is dying," said the child.

"What is the matter with your mammy?" returned Hartly, as he stepped hastily out of the chaise.

"Oh, it is for want of victuals," sobbed the little one.

By this time he had reached the spot, where he saw reclined under an hedge, a decent-looking woman, apparently in the agonies of death—an infant hung at her breast.

By the assistance of the driver, he lifted her into the chaise, and following on foot himself, he perceived a house at no great distance, at which he ordered the carriage to stop. Here he procured some warmed wine, which the poor creature swallowed with great difficulty—she soon after opened her eyes, looked gratefully at Hartly, then closed them again.

“My poor mammy is dead,” cried the child, sobbing as if its little heart would burst.

Hartly tenderly lifted her into the house—got a bed prepared for her, and suitable refreshment for the child. Tom was impatient to push on his horses—but nothing could prevail on Hartly to leave the house, until he heard that the poor woman was recovering—he then went into the room where she was laid, and enquired her tale of sorrows.

She

She told him briefly, that she was the wife of a sailor who about three weeks ago came ashore at Plymouth, at which place he was taken ill of a fever, which she being informed of, hastened to him; for "indeed, Sir," said she, weeping, "John Sommers was the kindest husband that ever woman was blessed with."—She then went on to inform him, that the disorder had put a period to his life; his illness, with the expences of the funeral, had exhausted all their little stock of cash, and she was now on her way to London to receive the money which was due for her husband's wages.—"But alas, Sir," she added, looking tenderly at her babes—"I shall have no occasion for it."

Hartly bade her be comforted, and had she been well enough to have pursued her journey, most assuredly would he have resigned to her the chaise, and walked the remainder of the way—as
it

it was, he took out one of the pieces his guardian had that morning given him—'twas exactly half his humble portion—he looked at it—then with an emotion which none but minds like his could possibly feel; “Go,” cried he, “and administer to the relief of the wretched, I have health and youth—but this poor creature”——

He then presented the woman with the guinea—bade her adieu, and without staying to receive her thanks, hurried into the chaise.——

About ten that evening he arrived in London—where we will leave him to the repose we think he had a right to enjoy.—Ye powers who delight in beneficence like your own, hover o'er his pillow.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XII.

A FRIENDLY RECEPTION.

THE next morning Hartly waited on the gentleman, through whose interest he had obtained his appointment in the Company's service.

Mr. Dixon was an agreeable man, of forty-five; there was a politeness in his manner which was not so much the effect of education as of nature; in a word, he was humane and generous. The recommendation of the merchant was abundantly sufficient to ensure Hartly a cordial welcome in his family. He was soon introduced to Mrs. Dixon and her daughter, both amiable women; but there was something so inexpressibly engaging in the latter, that, we think, had not Sophia possessed the entire sovereignty of his heart, it must have been wholly

wholly captivated by the charms of Miss Dixon. She was about his own age, and very handsome; but so much sentiment beamed in her eyes, that one would have thought nature had formed her after the exact model of the amiable Sophia Wilson. Though bred in the soft lap of affluence, she was nevertheless untainted by the follies of fashion; rational amusements, and "the full free converse of the friendly heart," were, in her estimation, superior to them all.

With this agreeable family, Hartly was invited to spend the whole time of his continuance in London. The offer was too engaging not to be readily accepted; and in a society so exactly to his taste, his absence from his dear Sophia was rendered more tolerable. He did not omit writing to her by the first opportunity, and in his letter was the following passage.

" If

“ If I was to measure my future suc-
“ cefs in life by the fortunate incident
“ that has now attended me, I should
“ certainly draw a moft flattering pre-
“ fage ; for I am fituated, during my
“ ftay in town, with a moft amiable fa-
“ mily, the daughter of which feems
“ fo exact a counterpart of yourfelf,
“ that I think my indulgent ftars have
“ kindly difpofed of me here, to render
“ my abfence from your dear felf lefs
“ infupportable. Her fentiments are
“ fo refined ; her remarks fo juft ; and
“ wit fo delicate, that, I think, when ſhe
“ ſpeaks I hear my beloved Sophia.
“ I forget that fourſcore miles are now
“ between us—that I can ſee her no
“ more—till—oh heavens ! till when
“ —but I will not indulge a reflection
“ that never fails to ſink me into de-
“ ſpondency—although

“ Seas riſe between us, and whole oceans roll,”

“ will

“ will not our kindred minds, my
“ Sophia, associate? They will—for our
“ attachment was founded in mind
“ alone, it cannot then be dissolved
“ while our souls are permitted to exist.”

Mrs. Dixon understanding Hartly had not been in London before, was desirous of shewing him whatever might be supposed worthy a stranger's observation. They visited all the public edifices, as well as the various repositories of genius. He was pleased with the magnificence of the public buildings, and as a patriot felt an honest exultation; but he thought, as many others have done, that the metropolis was overbuilt, and recollected the observation of Dean Swift, that when too large a proportion of the community are drawn to the capital, it argues a defect in the body politic; as the blood flowing too copiously to the head, indicates a bad constitution.

Miss

Miss Dixon asked Hartly if he was fond of plays? He replied in the affirmative, adding that he thought them the most rational of all our public amusements.

"So do I," returned the lady, "and if agreeable to you, Madam, (to her mother) we will go to-night."

Mrs. Dixon replying, that she had no objection, a servant was dispatched to secure a box — the Heiress was that evening performed — "How amiable," said Hartly, "is the character of Lady Emily — the author was well acquainted with human nature."

"I rejoice, Mr. Hartly," replied Miss Dixon smiling, "that your acquaintance with books has not made you a cynic — an effect they too often have on retired persons, who exalting their ideas rather to what mankind should be, than to what they are, are perpetually

“petually quarrelling with the world for
“disappointing their groundless expectations.”

“If I am not of that number, Madam,”
he returned, “it is rather owing to some
“fortunate circumstances, than to any
“merit of my own. It has been my
“good fortune to find among the limited
“circle of my acquaintance, some
“accomplished and amiable characters
“— who do honour to their species —
“and in this singular felicity continued
“he,” (bowing expressively to the lady)
“my kind stars seem still disposed to favour
“me.”

Miss Dixon translated this compliment exactly as he would have had her. She smiled satisfactorily; for say what we will of self-mortification, praise is always grateful to the human ear, and for good reasons, which we could shew if we would, it certainly ought to be so. However, to wave a reply, she asked him
whether

whether he could also allow the author's judgment in the character of Miss Alscrip.

“ I see no reason, Madam,” said he, “ to question it. I consider human nature as a beautiful picture, diversified by lights and shades. In Miss Alscrip, the author has forcibly described the power of wealth on an uneducated and illiberal mind.”

The curtain then drawing up, interrupted the conversation; for Miss Dixon was not one of those ladies who think an attention to the drama the most inconsiderable point at a theatre.

They returned home highly satisfied with the piece and the performance --- Hartly staid a few days longer with this worthy family, when the ship in which he was to sail being ready, he embarked --- and for some years bade adieu to his native land.

CHAPTER XIII.

SUNDAY SCHOOLS INTRODUCED.

HARTLY thus fairly out of the way, Miss Addington began to abate something of that severity with which she had constantly regarded Sophia. When no longer viewed as a dangerous rival, she could even bear to hear her perfections extolled without those very painful emotions which that subject excited in her bosom, whilst Hartly, on whose heart the reader suspects she had herself some design, was no longer present; she perceived also, that the justice was extremely assiduous to promote an intimacy between herself and Sophia; and as he always was very careful to veil his attention to that young lady, under the specious appearance of compassion for a friendless, well-

well-bred young woman, his sister at last condescended to oblige him. Sophia was therefore frequently invited to the Hall. 'Tis true, his worship took all opportunities of saying the civillest things to her—but they were always received by her with a sort of filial respect. She began to consider him as the faithful guardian of her beloved Hartly, and failed not to place much of the attention he paid her, to his regard for his amiable ward. He deemed it prudent to proceed with caution, and had therefore suffered nothing hitherto to escape him, that might contradict such a supposition.

Caroline Brown, who always took the cast of her behaviour from those who were her superiors in rank, seeing the respect with which Sophia was treated at the Hall, became also more condescending, and even affected a violent regard for her—she had, 'tis true, on
her

her return from school behaved rather coolly to her — but then there was much to be said for it; she seldom saw her in the suite of the great, and consequently regarded her as one whom nobody knew — for it was a maxim she had picked up in the course of her education, to estimate the value of persons, not by their intrinsic merit, but by the rank they hold in the fashionable world — Those, therefore, who can precisely determine the meaning of the word good company, according to genteel dialect, will not fail to applaud her conduct as highly becoming one who expects to rise in the world.

Caroline and Sophia had formerly been on a very intimate footing, when they went to the village school together — but then that was before Miss Brown had attained the summit of education, and consequently knew no better. — Sophia, whose excellent heart,
once

once attached still remained so, had no idea of the alteration in her friend's sentiments, and, therefore, as soon as she heard of her return had paid her a morning visit.

"Well, my dear Caroline, how do you do after your journey? Are you not happy in returning to Coombe?"

Caroline, drawing herself up, with a contemptuous air, replied, "Perhaps, Miss Wilson, so rustic a place may suit your taste—but I can't say it does mine."

"Why, my dear, we have been very happy in it before now, when we used to go a nutting on Saturdays, or played with our dolls in the garden."

"Really, Ma'am, I do not remember these things now; the noise of the town, and other avocations, have put them quite out of my mind."

Sophia, who by no means wanted penetration, began to discover the newly

acquired character of her old play-mate and school-fellow ; but not seeming to observe it, she told Caroline that she hoped they should renew their intimacy, and begged to see her as soon as possible ; to which she returned a slight reply ; the cool formality of which almost froze Sophia's amiable and tender heart. Miss Brown did not return the visit ; and the other, unconscious of having given the slightest cause for such an unfriendly reserve, imputed the alteration in her conduct to the true motive, namely, the operation of a town education on a mind neither liberal nor informed. From that time, only the most distant civilities had passed between the two ladies. Nothing, however, could now exceed the attention constantly paid by Caroline to Miss Wilson.

Mrs. Stanley, though she did not approve of Miss Addington's extreme levity, was of opinion, there were advantages
to

to be acquired by such an acquaintance, which Sophia could not possibly receive if confined wholly to her society—for this reason it was, that she took every opportunity of improving the intimacy, yet omitting not to caution her young friend against imbibing any modes, however sanctioned by fashion, that were repugnant to piety or good sense. Sophia was no stranger to Miss Addington's propensity, to ridicule whatever wore the appearance of seriousness or devotion. She had not unfrequently seen her peruse a play or novel, while her brother was reading family prayers. She had also heard her condemn the weakness of those, who submitted their conduct to the guidance of a set of old fashioned preachers, and their judgment to what she termed religious prejudices. But an instance one day occurred, which more effectually set Sophia on her guard against the con-

tagion of impiety, than half a score lessons on the subject would have done.

Caroline and Sophia accompanied Miss Addington to the parish church; who behaved with tolerable decency as long as the eye of the justice was on her; but no sooner had he turned his back, and composed himself in prayer, than she drew out of her work bag a pack of cards, and dealing them on her lap for picquet,

"Come hither Caroline," said she, in a whisper—"you are very aukward at cards, child—I will instruct you—" "You are never to reckon your own game, being youngest hand, before your opponent has mentioned her's."

"Lord have mercy upon us," (responded both the ladies) "and incline our hearts to keep this law!"

"Look you, child, you must acquire a dexterity, so as to be able to cheat without being observed."—"Lord have mercy upon us," &c.

"Now

“ Now, when you have discarded,
“ and should have occasion for a card
“ you have laid out, nothing is more
“ easy than to take it into your hand
“ again, provided you are dexterous, and
“ can assume an unembarrassed counte-
“ nance.—Lord have mercy upon us,
“ and write all these laws in our hearts
“ we beseech thee.”

Sophia was almost petrified with astonishment, at a behaviour so shockingly indecent.—The impious inuendoes she had often heard Miss Addington let fall, had excited her pity; but that a human being should be so daringly irreligious, as even to take pains in deriding the institutes of divine worship, in the sacred spot where the awful presence of the Creator was supposed more immediately to reside, was to her horrid beyond expression.—She could not avoid mentioning to Mrs. Stanley her feelings on the occasion.

“ I know not,” said that lady, “ whe-
“ ther Miss Addington’s ignorance or
“ impiety, be most conspicuous in this
“ unbecoming instance—both seem to
“ me to have a share, or rather I con-
“ sider the latter as a consequence of
“ the former.—I remember the author
“ of the Spectator, addressing some per-
“ sons of this cast; tells them, ‘ they
“ want parts to be devout ;’—however
“ that be—there is certainly nothing
“ so well becomes a human creature,
“ as steady, unaffected piety. To see a
“ rational intelligent being, bowing
“ down with sentiments of love, hu-
“ mility, and gratitude, to the Al-
“ mighty power who forms and up-
“ holds him, is the most glorious sight
“ in the whole creation. For this reason,
“ all assemblies of public worship, of
“ whatever denomination, never fail to
“ inspire me with veneration, and sub-
“ lime pleasure.—Is it any proof of
“ superior

“superior sense, my Sophia, for a person
 “to affect to deride what is certainly
 “the end and glory of his nature? Be-
 “lieve me, however fashion may au-
 “thorize, yet it has its undoubted ori-
 “gin in a confined understanding.—
 “Whenever we see any one deficient in
 “the common rules of good breeding,
 “and failing in that respect which su-
 “periority of any kind requires, do
 “we hesitate to impute such conduct to
 “an uninformed mind? — With how
 “much more reason may we ascribe to
 “the same cause those indecently shock-
 “ing instances, of want of reverence to
 “the Sovereign of all nature.”

“I know, my dear, the sentiments
 “which your tender mind imbibed
 “from one of the best as well as sensi-
 “ble of men, will teach you to look with
 “disgust on such modes of conduct.
 “Suffer me, however, to remark, that a
 “pious dependence on providence, or

“ in other words, a proper sense of re-
“ ligious, is a source of the noblest plea-
“ sure an intelligent creature can taste—
“ to a mind at ease, it heightens every
“ enjoyment ;—but how shall I describe
“ the divine consolations it administers
“ to the heart oppressed with sorrow !—
“ There, my Sophia, it is our support
“ when every other comfort disappears,
“ as none who possess this happy turn
“ of mind, can be said to be truly
“ miserable even in the worst of cir-
“ cumstances — so on the other hand,
“ how heavily falls the weight of adver-
“ sity, where there is not this internal
“ principle to resist its force. Ever
“ then, my love, cherish a steady, habi-
“ tual piety ; it will exalt and refine your
“ sentiments, give a vent to every en-
“ joyment, and alleviate the sorrows
“ which probably may surround your
“ path.”

Sophia

Sophia assured her excellent mistress, she would ever zealously cultivate such an affectionate reverence for the eternal providence, as would afford her an asylum in every event; "for," continued she, "however such an one as Miss Addington, for whom a smiling fortune prepares whatever is dear to the human heart, may despise the aids of religion; yet Madam, the hapless children of dependence, (and her eye glistened as she spoke) whom the world neither knows nor cherishes, find their interest in that devout—that sublime intercourse, which habitual piety maintains with the Creator. We must rejoice in the idea of possessing a friend who will not despise humble merit—a friend whom no time can change, nor circumstances affect."

Sophia had expressed herself with an enthusiasm, which affected, and at once delighted her benefactress—
who

who, tenderly folding her to her bosom, kissed off the falling tear.

That day being Sunday, they agreed to pay a visit to one of those excellent charities called Sunday-schools; and walking down the village, they stopped at a decent cottage where the children were assembled. The presence of the ladies had a visible effect on the little circle; a spirit of emulation pervaded it,—every one was desirous of excelling the rest, in reading the catechism, &c. —This laudable strife suggested a hint to Mrs. Stanley, and she immediately desired that all those whose progress could be approved by the mistress, should go that evening with her to the Grove, and partake of a good supper for their reward.—The children were overjoyed; and as soon as they were dismissed, walked two and two to the house—where a plentiful repast was set before them; after which, they departed

parted in the same order, every little face expressing a look of entire satisfaction.

The good lady was yet standing at her gate, observing, with much delight, the decent procession, when Doctor Hanham, who was just come from the Hall, stopped to enquire her health. After replying to his polite enquiry, she began to expatiate on the happy effects which the institution of a Sunday school had produced in the village, by the introducing sobriety and diligence among the populace.

Now the doctor did not approve the plan at all, or rather would not appear to approve it, lest his contribution should have been expected. This was a piece of finessè worthy his reverence's profound sagacity; for he knew, that simply refusing his quota would have brought on him the imputation of parsimony, (by the way, the doctor's best sermon was

against covetousness) he, therefore, wisely resolved to object to the institution itself, tagging all his arguments against it, with the fourth commandment.

"I am no friend to works of supererogation," said he, dryly, "nor can I at all approve of a plan, however good in itself, that tends to invalidate an express command."

"I am no casuist," returned Mrs. Stanley, "but cannot help thinking this objection something of a Jewical nature. You remember the cavil of the Jews against our Saviour for healing a sick person on the sabbath-day; you also recollect his reply: from whence, Doctor, I infer, that if the Messiah thought it laudable to perform a bodily cure on that day, it is yet more justifiable to effect a mental one."

"I always

“ I always yield an argument to a lady,” replied the doctor, smiling somewhat contemptuously, and shaking his head with an air of profound wisdom; on which we shall make no other comment than merely reminding the reader of the story of a blockhead, who being desired by some ladies to explain to them a Latin motto, one syllable of which he was utterly unable to translate, replied with a wink, shrug of the shoulders, and other sagacious signs of profound learning, that it was not altogether proper for their hearing.

CHAPTER XIV.

A FRIEND IN NEED.

“ I HAVE received letters of a very interesting nature,” said the merchant, one morning as he entered his brother’s apartment.

Now

Now the term *interesting* leaves the hearer at liberty to annex to it either the idea of pleasure or pain. The justice chose the former; and, not doubting but the merchant had heard of some new acquisition of wealth, his countenance assumed a glow of satisfaction; for he literally considered every augmentation of his brother's fortune as so much added to his own.

"I am heartily glad of it, brother."

The merchant, not aware of the two-fold interpretation his expression was capable of, looked a little queerly.

"I have lost every thing," said he, gravely.

It was now his worship's turn to look queerly. "Lost every thing, brother! What do you mean?"

"Read that," giving him a letter, the contents of which were as follows:

"Sir,

" Sir,

" I am sorry to acquaint you that Mr.
" Peter's, your banker, has stopped pay-
" ment, and is not expected to pay half
" a crown to the pound; you will do
" well to come to town immediately.

" I am, &c. &c."

Had a thousand thunder bolts burst
impetuously from the clouds, the justice
could not have looked more aghast; he
felt this stroke even more severely than
his brother, by as many degrees as the
love of money had taken firmer posses-
sion of his heart.

" I will go this instant to London,"
said the merchant.

The chaise was ordered, and he sat
out the same evening. Upon his arrival
in town, he found the information he
had received but too well groundèd.
There was nothing to be done in the
business, and he could only sit down
and reflect on the instability of fortune,
that

that had now left him, after a youth of toil in the burning regions of the torrid zone, totally destitute in the decline of life. But he despised complaint as much as he detested the cold pity of unfeeling minds; he retired within himself, and, in his own innate rectitude, found that consolation which the world could not bestow.

He had still, however, one distant hope remaining; he had a ship at sea that was daily expected home, the cargo of which would at least afford him a competency; with that he resolved to be content. He could not, however, be wholly unobservant of the alteration visible in the behaviour of some of his acquaintance, whose air and manner began to wear that distant reserve, which but barely deserves the name of civility. At this he was not at all surprized, well knowing that pecuniary distresses have some qualities not unlike those

those of the torpedo, which cause a chilling sensation in those who touch it. — His happiness had not been founded on the applause of the world, nor was it capable of being shaken by the loss of it. The few whom he had honoured with an intimate acquaintance, were superior to such a meanness, and for the rest he cared not a fous.

But misfortune, it has been observed, never comes singly — the measure of his calamity was not yet full. Some days after his arrival in London, news was brought that the ship which he daily had expected, had foundered in a storm. Those with whom the merchant had commercial connections took the alarm, and one in particular. A sagacious person, prudently considering that delay breeds danger, ordered a writ against him.

He was one morning sitting at breakfast, in a thoughtful mood, reflecting
on

on the adverse turn of his affairs, when a couple of ill-looking men entered the room. He arose, and with great civility, desired them to be seated — for so accustomed had he always been to these acts of attention, to even the lowest individual, that they were now become almost involuntary acts — and my Lord S—— could as soon have desired an inferior to sit in his presence, as this good man could permit such to stand.

The eldest of the men — a short, ill-looking, pale-faced fellow, immediately gave him a slap on the shoulder, saying at the same time, “ You are our man, “ Sir.”

The merchant never having been so accosted, was really at a loss to comprehend his meaning — however, the other soon informed him, that they had a writ against him at the suit of Mr. Tactum for the sum of three hundred pounds.

“ Really,

“ Really,” said the merchant, “ I have
“ not that sum by me — but you will
“ take bail.”

“ Yes, yes,” cried the bailiff, “ we
“ will take bail — but you must be
“ speedy, for we have other business of
“ this kind to do.”

“ I am sorry for it,” said the merchant,
feelingly, “ and calling for ink and pa-
“ per, he wrote the following billet to
“ his brother.

To John Addington, Esq;

“ Fortune seems to take a pleasure in
“ persecuting me, I think. The ship which
“ you know I expected, is lost at sea —
“ and that ungrateful wretch Tactum,
“ to whom a few years ago I lent money
“ to establish him in business, has caused
“ me to be arrested for 300l. I make
“ no doubt but you will instantly remit
“ me that sum — or if you have it not at
“ hand, that you will instantly come to
“ town and give your bail. — My friend
“ Dixon

“Dixon is unluckily in France, or I
“know he would have prevented this
“application

“From your affectionate brother,

“C. Addington.”

A messenger was dispatched to the Hall with the letter, who found the justice at supper with his sister and the rector. — Having perused the note, he gave it coolly to her, saying at the same time, “Charles’s misfortunes have affected his head, I fancy—a mighty pretty
“proposal, truly — no, no, 3ool. is not
“so easily found — I know the value of
“money, though he never did.”

Miss Addington having read the note, wiped her eyes, for indeed reader, they were brimful of tears — Nature will sometimes peep forth, in spite of all the bandages with which she is hoodwinked. — Miss Addington really felt for her brother’s situation; there is something extremely tremendous, to a female
mind

mind especially, in the idea of bailiffs and imprisonment; we wonder not, therefore, at finding her affected — but the exact point of surprize, is, that having a clear thirty thousand in her own possession, it should not have come into her head to yield him the trifling pittance of three hundred — it never did. —

The rector being consulted, gave it as his opinion, that misfortune was but another name for imprudence. — The merchant had always acted as one who knew not the value of money, and mentioned as proofs of the assertion, some considerable sums he had been known foolishly (perhaps a few singular people would have said charitably) to squander away. — It also occurred to him (for what is there which the sharp eye of worldly minded prudence does not perceive? that there might be other creditors who would expect their money also; and, therefore, upon the whole, was of
opinion

opinion, that for his worship to extricate his brother from this embarrassment, would be absolutely idle and ineffective.

Advice so sage, and withal so much of a piece with his own inclination, could not but be readily acceded to by the justice. Perhaps if the merchant had not prefaced his letter with an account of the loss of his ship, he might have stepped forth to his assistance; as the matter stood 'twas impracticable — but then respect must be paid to appearances. Positively to refuse the loan to a brother for whom he had professed a more than ordinary affection, would have had something unkind in its aspect --- the world might have thought so --- the messenger had delivered the letter into his own hand --- that was unlucky --- otherwise the affair could have been managed decently enough.

A thought

A thought started into his worship's head. "I don't find myself quite well to-night, sister," said he, "I will go to bed."

"You are too much affected, brother; you shall have some sack whey."

The justice ordered his bed to be warmed and retired. By the next morning he was very ill—extremely ill—could not undertake a journey to London on any account—had not he cash by him, of course could not send it—all his money was out on mortgages.

It was well contrived; never had his worship's invention shone so bright; we really did not imagine he had been so clever; but necessity, says the old adage, is the parent of invention.

He wrote a short answer to the merchant, importing his very deep concern at the event, professed his readiness to assist him; but had not he money by him, and was prevented from being in town

town by a sudden fit of illness, occasioned he believed by the severe shock his letter had given him. As soon, however, as he got better, he would not fail to be in London; or in a month or two, could perhaps procure him such a sum as he had specified.

The better to carry on the farce, the messenger was introduced to the bed side, and in faint accents, as became a person in acute pain; he desired him to deliver the letter to his brother, with great care and caution.

How greatly was the poor merchant disappointed, at the return of the messenger—his brother to refuse him such a favour—a brother who was extremely rich, and had avowed so violent an affection for him.—'Twas in vain to conceal his chagrin—the watchful bailiffs were apprized of the matter; and now began to lose all patience, as they before

fore had their good manners, they insisted on taking him to prison.

“Stay, gentlemen,” said he. “I have been thinking.”——

“No matter what,” interrupted one of them. “Look’ye master, you can’t get bail I see—and in case a man can neither do that, nor pay the money; there is but one way, d’ye see; and so come along with us.”

“But does a jail pay debts?”

“That’s none of our business—come, the coach is at the door.”

At that instant, a decrepid old man, whose appearance bespoke him not worth a groat, entered the room.—“Stop a minute, gentlemen,” said he, “will you take my bail?” with a smile.

“Be gone, you old varlet,” cried one of the men.—“Your bail! you look like a pretty fellow to give bail.”

“Will you take my money, then?”, returned he dryly, producing at the

same time, a canvas bag from his pocket.—The men looked surprised,—as for the merchant, he considered it as a jest on his misfortunes.

“There,” cried the old man, emptying the contents of the bag on a table; “count the money.”

The bailiffs sat eagerly about it, and found the sum amount to three hundred and ten pounds, which was sufficient also to defray the lawyer’s costs. They then took their leave, telling the merchant, “he was free.”

“And now, Sir,” said the stranger, “as I suppose there may be others who will treat you in the same manner, you must go with me to a private lodging.”

The merchant, who had hitherto stood mute with surprise and emotion, suffered himself, without speaking, to be conveyed to the coach, which still waited at the door, and his unknown bene-

benefactor conducted him to a private, but comfortable lodging in Barton Street.

“And now, Sir,” said the old man, shutting the door, “do you remember John Sommers, a gardener some years ago at the Hall?”

“I do—but you are not that person.”

“The very same! Oh my dear master, I am John Sommers indeed!—When I left your father’s service, I went and took some garden ground at Brentford—there I married a good woman; by whose assistance, I have saved about 350*l.* we lived very comfortably together till about three years since; when it pleased God to take her.”

“But how, my respectable friend, did you know my misfortune?” “I will tell you, master!—I keep Covent Garden with fruits and greens—the gentlewoman of the house where you

H 2

“lodged,

“lodged, came this morning and dealt
“with me. As she stood buying her
“things, I overheard her, telling a
“neighbour of your distress. I did not,
“’tis true, much regard what she said,
“’till I caught the name of Addington.”
“I then asked her if that was the name
“of the gentleman she was speaking
“of?”—‘Yes,’ said she—‘Charles Ad-
‘dington of Oxfordshire, and a wor-
‘thy man he is.’ “I made no an-
“swer, but hurried home as soon as I
“could, and got together my money;
“ (for she had mentioned the sum you
“were sued for)—And now,” master,
continued the worthy gardener, “is
“there any thing else in which I can
“be of service to you?”

“Excellent old man!” replied the
merchant, “you have already served
“me, I fear, beyond the possibility of
“recompence; for indeed, John, I do
“not know that I am worth a shilling
“in

“in the world, save the trifle in my
 “pocket; and to have deprived you
 “of the earnings of painful industry—I
 “can’t bear it, John! indeed I can’t.”

“Oh, never regard it, master. I
 “have done my duty, and God will
 “repay me, if you cannot.”

“My worthy friend, your exalted
 “generosity, inspires my veneration,
 “as the act you have so nobly done,
 “does my gratitude!—But indeed I
 “am distressed, exquisitely distressed,”
 added the merchant, with an emotion
 which suppressed the power of further
 utterance.

The gardener seeing him so much
 affected, thought it best to leave him
 to himself; and therefore, withdrew—
 adding, “he would call the next day
 “to see if he had any further occasion
 “for his services.”

Now, ye narrow-souled possessors of
 wealth! What say ye to poor John

Sommers?—Descend grandeur from thy stately canopy, and bow the knee to this old gardener, whose liberal mind eclipses your ideal glory, and excites a blush in the cheek of parsimonious affluence.

CHAPTER XV.

JOURNEY TO LONDON.

THE merchant continued at the lodging in Barton Street, utterly unable to determine on what plan of life to pursue, by which he might evade the gripe of indigence, that now with rapid strides seemed approaching.—The behaviour of his brother the justice, had determined him against all further application to that quarter. When, to his great joy and surprise, intelligence arrived of the ship he had given over for lost; and in a few days he had
the

the satisfaction of seeing her arrive safely into port.—About the same time, his banker had appeared to the statute, and a dividend being made of his effects, he received therefrom about ten thousand pounds; which, with the amount of the ship's cargo, afforded him, if not affluence, at least a competency.

The first use he made of this happy turn of affairs, was to reimburse the benevolent gardener; he would have rewarded him—but the noble soul of John Sommers was above all reward, save the consciousness of having rescued his beloved master from distress; a consciousness which to such a mind, infinitely exceeded all pecuniary satisfactions.

The merchant having settled his affairs, was impatient to effect a scheme he had formed, of retiring to a remote part of the kingdom. Disgusted with mankind, and determined never more

to have any intercourse with his unworthy relatives, he resolved to pass his future life in solitude; and for this purpose, pitched on a small village, on the farthest borders of Northumberland.—Here he purchased a pleasant house, with about an acre of garden ground behind it, and a beautiful meadow adjoining: his household consisted only of an elderly woman, who superintended the family, and a footman to look after a couple of horses, and occasionally work in the garden. In this retired mode of life, he soon began to recover his native cheerfulness of temper, which, notwithstanding the solitary scheme he had formed, led him to enjoy the society which so sequestered a situation afforded. In this respect the spot he had chosen, was particularly favoured, several most agreeable families residing in its vicinity. With these he took the amusements of hunting,

ing, shooting, &c. and tasted the pleasures of rational and virtuous conversation.—Here then, good reader, in a retirement, which in his own esteem, was a perfect epitome of Elysium, we will leave the good merchant, to enjoy the satisfaction of a pleasant country, a sociable neighbourhood, and a philosophical disposition; that ever inclined him to make the most of present good, without indulging gloomy reflections on the past or future.

We will return to Addington-hall, where his jolly worship, who was long since perfectly recovered from his indisposition, had scarcely bestowed a thought on his brother, or his affairs. He might be in jail for aught he knew, 'twas the fate of many a deserving man, and if he was—why—he had prudently resolved not to get him out—that's all.

The summer was pretty far advanced, and the family began to think of going

to London.—“Suppose, sister, we invite Miss Wilson to accompany us,” said the justice.

“If you desire it particularly, brother.”

“Nay sister,” returned he, a little disconcerted at the emphasis with which she had spoken.—“I—I don’t desire it —I was only thinking it to be an act of kindness to a poor girl.”

“Well, then the poor girl shall go,” said she smiling; “but I wish she was not quite so grave a companion.”

“Surely Sophia has naturally a good deal of vivacity; but you mean, I suppose, that she is deficient in fashionable levity—never fear, child, the town will mend her.”

“I believe,” thought Miss Addington, “you hope it will have that effect;” for this lady had too much penetration, not to suspect her brother’s penchant for Sophia; but as she had
reason

reason also to suppose, that matrimony was by no means included in his designs, she was pretty easy on the matter; and therefore, to oblige him, she took the first opportunity of importuning Mrs. Stanley to consent, that Miss Wilson should accompany the family to town.

Sophia had not the remotest wish to quit the friendly mansion of her beloved benefactress; nor did the idea of a jaunt to the metropolis afford her the smallest pleasure.—Mrs. Stanley, ever ready to accelerate any measure, by which she thought her dear girl might be advantaged, consented to the proposal.—Sophia therefore complied, though not without reluctance. — Caroline Brown had already been engaged to make one of the party; and all things being ready for their departure, they sat off for London.

Here a new world was opened to the charming Sophia, not exactly to her taste indeed, who had been used to far different scenes. The unnatural inversion of hours, peculiar to your people of the ton; the perpetual round of company, and dissipation, in which she was engaged, often induced her to wish for the sober pleasures, and calm delights of Coombe:—yet, though by no means satisfied with her situation, she acquitted herself with a gracefulness and ease, as might have led a spectator, to suppose she had always been accustomed to the sphere in which she now moved.

Not such was the case with Miss Brown; who, in spite of her avowed passion for genteel life, could not wholly divest herself of a certain air of vulgarity, which distinguished in every motion the illiterate rustic.—Nature had given her no pretensions to wit; but
this

this deficiency, she attempted to supply, by an odious affectation of that quality, which never failed to procure her the contempt of those from whom she sought to acquire applause.—She launched into every species of dissipation, with extreme avidity—affected the utmost freedom, and even licentiousness of manners, esteeming such an indulgence, the perfection of polite breeding; and before she had been a quarter of a year in this scene of fashion and folly, was become quite a demi-rep.—Zealous as were her endeavours to attract admiration, she had the extreme mortification of perceiving all her efforts abortive; whilst the modest, gentle, unassuming, Sophia, acquired the general notice and esteem at all public places to which they went. By the mistaken indulgence of her parents, Caroline, was indeed enabled to eclipse that lovely girl in the blaze and splendour

dor of apparel, which was no small gratification of her vanity.

But beauty (says the poet) needs not the foreign aid of ornament;

It is when unadorned, adorned the most.

The elegance of Sophia's person—the expression of her fine features, and the delicacy, and refinement of her manners, abundantly atoned for the deficiency of external decorations, and procured her the admiration for which her companion sighed in vain. So distinguished a preference, it might naturally be supposed, would not fail to awaken sentiments of envy, in one of Caroline's disposition—her heart burned with all the rage of hatred and malevolence towards her fair rival, and she took all opportunities of saying and doing a thousand ill-natured things, which the good nature of the other generally prevented her from resenting.

It

It cannot however be imagined, but that such a situation was not the most agreeable to one of Sophia's sensibility; but she had other reasons besides the malignity of Miss Brown, to induce her to wish herself most heartily at Coombe.—The justice having now obtained the very point he had been labouring, from the first hour he beheld her; namely, the having her in the same home with himself, threw off at length all reserve, and scrupled not to entertain her with his passion. Finding all his protestations were ineffectual, to awaken one tender sentiment in her bosom towards him, he at length, judging no doubt, of her disposition by his own, concluded he might have more to hope from her avarice than her love, and accordingly, in a very tender billet, in which he professed the warmest passion, he presented her a *carte-blanche*, desiring her to make her
own

own terms, as long as she should bless him with the possession of her charming person.

The indignation of Sophia at this proposal, may be better imagined than described; she determined at all events to quit the house, where she could not suppose her honour any longer safe. But the justice dreading an affair, so little to his credit, should transpire, expressed so much contrition for his conduct, that she was prevailed on to conceal her resentment, out of regard to a family from whom she had, as she conceived, received obligations. From that time, he behaved to her with the greatest respect, and seemed to have lost all memory of his former passion, till an event occurred, which, by awakening his jealousy, convinced him that he had only smothered a regard which he was unable wholly to suppress.

Among

Among the numerous persons of rank, who visited the Addingtons, there was a Lord Molton, from whom Sophia received the most flattering distinction. Whenever they went to public places, this young nobleman was constantly at her side, and all his attentions were manifestly directed to her alone. So striking an attachment could not be unobserved by the justice, who, fearing he should infallibly lose the object of his desires, (we do not say love, for that refined sentiment, we believe his worship was incapable of feeling) resolved, since he could obtain her on no other terms, to offer her his hand in marriage. Finding her one day alone in the parlour, he dropped on one knee before her, and began to express his contrition for his late unworthy conduct; but she burst from him with indignation, and would have left the
room

room immediately, but placing himself before the door :

“ Suspend,” cried he, “ your resentment, but for five minutes ; I promise not to approach you, if you will only hear what I have to say. I love you, Miss Wilson, and will make you my true and lawful wife.”

“ I will not hear you on the subject ; let me go, Sir, I insist !”

“ You would not, Madam, have treated Lord Molton thus.”

“ Lord Molton, Sir, never dared to take such a liberty, and if he had” —

“ What then ?” impatiently.

“ Then I should have known how to have repulsed him, Sir.”

The justice’s countenance brightened.

“ That’s my good girl,” he replied.

“ Then you really do not like his Lordship ?”

“ I have no right to speak on that
“ head,

"head, as my Lord never imported me with his addresses."

"Torturing prevarication.—Speak, dearest girl—say, do you not like Lord Molton?"

The eagerness with which he spoke, and the anxiety visible in his countenance, alarmed her exceedingly. — She trembled, and was silent.

"'Tis too true," he resumed—"yes, yes, I see it."

"Indeed, Sir, I am not in the least prejudiced in favour of his Lordship. But open the door; for I positively will go."

"One question more, and I have done. —When did you hear from Hartly?"

"Not since he failed."

"Good again!—Then may I yet hope.—Look you, Sophia—I love you, and will raise you to the station your merit demands: nay stay, you shall hear me.—I here, in the most honour-
"able

“able terms, offer you marriage—accept
“then, I entreat, my hand and fortune.”

“Never, never,” cried she, with emotion, “will I hear you on the subject:—therefore release me Sir, or I
“will alarm the family.”

“Then go!” cried he, stamping his foot with indignation.—“Go for a silly
“chit—to refuse a man of my fortune,
“for such a snivelling dog as Hartly.”

Sophia heard not this last speech—she had flown up to her apartment, where she locked herself in, and burst into a flood of tears.

Caroline, who had formed some designs on the heart of Lord Molton, was a vigilant spy on his behaviour to Sophia; not a look, or word, escaped her. She had, however, hopes that a disclosure of Sophia’s dependant situation, would be sufficient to withdraw his Lordship’s devoirs from her; she
therefore

therefore carefully watched an opportunity of dropping some hints of that kind.—One day, as the company had all seated themselves at different card tables, Sophia, who never played, took out her knotting, and sat down on a sofa at the other end of the room.—Lord Molton also, to the entire mortification of Miss Brown, declined playing; for she had endeavoured to contrive him one of her party—Soon after he withdrew to the other side of the room, and seated himself by Sophia.

“Do you never play, Miss Wilson?” said he.

“Seldom, my Lord.”

“Then you are not so rigid, as absolutely to resolve against cards—
“shall we have a game at picquet.”

“I must beg to be excused, my Lord.”

Caroline, who had attended to the tete a tete, more than to her game, took
an

an opportunity between the deals, to remark that fortune had run much against her, and added, loud enough to be heard by his Lordship, for whom the hint was intended, "I protest I must soon adopt Miss Wilson's prudent resolve; for, you know Madam, there is great merit in declining play, when one has nothing to lose."

Lord Molton affected not to hear her, though he perfectly understood the hint, and addressing Sophia, resumed, by way of oblique retort on the other—"I will not press you, charming Miss Wilson; to say truth, I seldom knew a young lady fond of cards, who had abilities to amuse herself more rationally."

Caroline heard, and blushed with indignation. Sophia modestly replied, "She could boast no superiority in that respect; but she really did not like play."

"Then

"Then you are fond of music, perhaps?"

"Yes, passionately!"

"I will propose a party to the opera, to-morrow evening." Sophia bowed assentingly—and soon after the company broke up. Caroline was excessively out of humour, and never honoured Sophia with a single word during the remainder of the evening.—The aggressor, (says a trite maxim) never pardons.

CHAPTER XVI.

NEWS FROM THE EAST.

SOPHIA was one day sitting with a large company in the drawing room, when the footman delivered her a letter—the hand was Hartly's, a glow of
of

of satisfaction gave additional fire to her eyes. She withdrew to read it. Caroline, agitated by an irresistible inclination to let Lord Molton into the secret, contrived a variety of schemes for that purpose; not doubting but when he should understand Miss Wilson had a favourite lover, he would be induced to withdraw his addresses, and probably direct them to herself. At last she took a chair near enough his Lordship, for him to overhear what she should say, without her seeming to design he should do so.

“ I dare say Miss Wilson,” said she, addressing herself to Miss Addington, “ has received a long epistle from the “ happy swain, by the time it takes “ her to read it.”

The bait took exactly.—“ Has Miss “ Wilson then a favoured swain?” asked Lord Molton anxiously.

“ Oh

“ Oh yes, my Lord; a very favoured
“ one indeed.”

His Lordship sighed, but made no reply.—Sophia soon after entered the room—her eyes looked a little red—the carnation of her cheeks was heightened—there was also more vivacity than usual in her air—in short, Lord Molton thought her handsomer than ever—he was however extremely pensive, which drew on him the raillery of the company.

“ Really, my Lord,” cried Miss Brown, “ I would not have given you
“ that piece of intelligence, if I had
“ known what a sad effect it would
“ have had on your Lordship’s spirits.”
“ Dear Ladies, I only said, Miss Wil-
“ son might have had a letter from a
“ favourite lover, and see what has
“ been the consequence!”

Sophia was covered with blushes—
my Lord was quite disgusted with her

indelicate raillery, and, in order to give the conversation a new turn, as well as to relieve Miss Wilson from the embarrassment he saw she was under, he sportively replied :

“ You know, dear Ladies, that music
“ is allowed the most powerful remedy
“ for a splenetic humour ; which of you
“ will have charity enough to apply
“ the medicine ? ”

“ That will I,” said a sprightly young lady, and immediately played a lively air on the harpsichord.

His Lordship thanked her—and addressing Miss Brown — “ Will not,” said he, “ the fair lady whose penetration so aptly discovered the malady,
“ (a little sarcastically) contribute also
“ to the cure ? ”

Caroline was compelled to own she could not play.——

“ There is one who can,” said the justice, pointing to Sophia, and taking
ing

ing her hand, he led her to the instrument, which she touched with so masterly a skill, as charmed every ear. The warm applauses that were echoed from every mouth, grated the malignant soul of Caroline—she chatted—laughed, and said a thousand silly things to conceal her chagrin.

Lord Molton soon after complaining of a head-ach, took his leave, as shortly did the rest of the company.—Sophia retired to her apartment as soon as she decently could, to re-peruse her dear Hartly's letter, which as the reader may have some curiosity to examine also, we here give verbatim.

“ To Miss Wilson.

“ Can it be possible, that almost half
 “ the convexity of the globe separates
 “ me from my soul's better half? Oh,
 “ Sophia, when I make that reflection,
 “ it almost unmans me: yet when I
 “ recollect, that I suffer this painful
 I 2 “ absence,

“ absence, with a view to facilitate that
“ desirable union, which I trust shall one
“ day connect us in indissoluble bonds ;
“ my spirits become more assured—I
“ rouse from my despondency, and pur-
“ sue with alacrity the toil of acquiring
“ wealth—for such my Sophia it is, ac-
“ cording to my idea. My station is lu-
“ crative—yet I carry about me certain
“ feelings, which infallibly prevent me
“ from making the most of the advan-
“ tages it offers—the heart which you
“ have regulated, cannot forget the
“ sentiments it caught from you !—
“ Why Sophia, did you teach it those
“ refinements; which form an insu-
“ perable bar to the acquisition of af-
“ fluence, on those terms so many of
“ my predecessors have obtained it?—
“ Can I ever forget what you have often
“ said; ‘ that you should abhor the
‘ wealth that was purchased at the ex-
‘ pence of the heart’s best feelings.’—
“ Exalted

“ Exalted girl !—but if honour forbids
“ me to be rich, it will at least allow
“ me a competency ; — your generous
“ mind I know is insensible to the
“ emotions of ambition—it looks down
“ with noble contempt on the empty
“ pageantry, which attracts the vulgar
“ eye. — Hail then thou blest period,
“ when I shall return to claim my So-
“ phia’s hand—when, rich in content,
“ and the tenderest love, we shall re-
“ tire from the impertinent gaze of the
“ multitude, and enjoy the extatic
“ transports of an union founded in the
“ soul.”

“ Oh, Sophia! how often do I wish
“ for your dear society, in those de-
“ lightful shades, with which kind na-
“ ture has adorned this torrid clime.
“ —Your lively imagination would de-
“ light in the vivid scenes—the mag-
“ nificent landscapes, which here arise
“ to the eye. The grand foliage of lofty
I 3 “ trees

“ trees—the charming tincture of fruits
“ and flowers, with the airy structure
“ of the buildings that are here and
“ there interspersed, would have a
“ transporting effect on a mind so de-
“ licately susceptible of the beautiful
“ and sublime.—But these external
“ beauties of nature, are not much
“ regarded by Europeans—it is her
“ internal productions, that have su-
“ perior charms for these sons of com-
“ merce.—’Tis gold, my Sophia, gold
“ alone absorbs their attention; — but
“ stop my pen,—may not the motive
“ be laudable—have they not all, like
“ me, some beloved object whom they
“ hope to make happy with the fruits
“ of their toil? They doubtless have.
“ Then heaven prosper their endeavours
“ —but ah, let them learn to set bounds
“ to these desires—let them not trans-
“ gress the immutable laws of conscience
“ and honour. To labour for the means
“ of

“ of evading a painful dependance —
“ the proud man’s contumely, and the
“ stings which patient merit of the un-
“ worthy takes, is allowable, nay com-
“ mendable—but to toil merely with a
“ view of gratifying luxury, or indulg-
“ ing voluptuousness, is an idle, perhaps
“ an unjustifiable pursuit. A truce, you,
“ cry, with these criticisms, look not at
“ the human heart through the tube of
“ illiberal prejudice. I have done, my
“ monitrefs, my friend.

“ And now let me ask after the wel-
“ fare of that generous, that noble mind-
“ ed man, Mr. Charles Addington, and
“ not crowd all enquiries after my
“ friends into the vag end of my letter.
“ Ah, Sophia, you know not the extent
“ of his beneficence to your Hartly.
“ The morning of my departure from
“ Coombe, he put a small box into my
“ hand, with orders not to open it till I
“ was embarked. Without enquiring

“ the motive of so singular a request, I
“ punctually obeyed it. We had been
“ two days at sea, when I ventured to
“ examine the friendly deposit; but
“ judge my surprize at finding it con-
“ tain notes to the amount of five hun-
“ dred pounds, folded up in a short
“ billet, which I here transcribe.”

“ To Edward Hartly.

“ I have inclosed these notes, because
“ I know, that in the commercial world,
“ it is money that gets money. Apply
“ this sum with judgment, and use its
“ accumulation with prudence. Riches
“ are a good; but remember, that rec-
“ titude and benevolence alone consti-
“ tute them so; where these are not,
“ they become the greatest curse with
“ which heaven can punish mankind.
“ You are now going to a country, the
“ very nature of which disposes to volup-
“ tuous softness; but be not so much
“ afraid

" afraid of the climate as the examples
" of too many of your countrymen.
" Frequently ask yourself the motive of
" your voyage. Was it not to rise on the
" pinions of industry, above the grovel-
" ling—the soul depressing fetters of
" indigence, and dependance? If it be
" so, then pursue the end you propose;
" be diligent—be indefatigable, but
" forget not your humanity, and let me
" see you return within half a dozen
" years, as rich as a reasonable man
" would desire to be.

" Yours, Charles Addington."

" You are an admirer, my Sophia,
" of this excellent person; how will
" your veneration be yet heightened
" by the above incident! Present, I
" beg, my most grateful returns—say
" —but no, it is impossible to say what
" I feel on the occasion.

“ To Mrs. Stanley, that pattern of
“ every female virtue, present my sin-
“ cere acknowledgements, for the in-
“ numerable favours conferred on your
“ dear self; my soul melts with the
“ most grateful emotion. Ah who
“ knows, but for the friendly asylum
“ her benevolence has afforded, the
“ woman whom I love above myself,
“ had shrunk beneath the piercing
“ blast of?—I will not go on; imagin-
“ ation recoils at the dreadful picture
“ it once so frequently drew. Yes, So-
“ phia, it drew it with the pencil of
“ heart rending anxiety, and bade the
“ tears of affection water the gloomy
“ piece. When I saw you left an or-
“ phan, when I reflected on your ac-
“ complishments, your refinement of sen-
“ timent; I cursed the partial hand of for-
“ tune, that had with-held me the means
“ of becoming your protector. Some-
“ times I saw you a humble dependant
“ on

“ on some capricious woman of qua-
“ lity; my heart bled at the idea of
“ your feelings. Sometimes I beheld
“ a lawless libertine, plotting the de-
“ struction of your innocence. My brain
“ was fired: I resolved never to leave
“ you till I had prevailed on you to
“ give me your hand; but honour
“ commonly met me in the way. Un-
“ worthy Hartly! it exclaimed, wouldst
“ thou ruin the very woman thy soul
“ doats on, by allying her to want,
“ and misery? No, rather tear thyself
“ from her presence, and seek the
“ means of raising her to a station her
“ worth demands.

“ But how I ramble—these, my amia-
“ ble Sophia, were often my reveries
“ at Coombe; I will not suffer them
“ to intrude on those smiling prof-
“ pects which now open to my view.
“ Surely a benignant providence will
“ favour our attachment—I will not

“doubt it—we shall—we shall be happy. Remember you have promised me your correspondence :”

“Heaven sure taught letters for some wretch’s
“aid,

“Some banish’d lover, or some constant
“maid;

“They live—they breathe—they speak what
“love inspires

“Warm from the heart, and faithful to its
“fires.

“Speed the soft intercourse from soul to soul,
“And waft a sigh from Indus, to the pole.

“Such then shall be my consolation
“during my painful absence from the
“friend of my heart—hence will be
“derived the only real satisfaction,
“which in his present comfortless situation, can be felt by

“Her faithful

“Edward Hartly.”

CHAP.

CHAPTER XVII.

EXCURSION TO KENSINGTON GARDENS.

THE intelligence which Caroline had so officiously given Lord Molton respecting Sophia's attachment, had secretly occasioned him much anxiety; for he passionately loved that young lady, and in spite of the libertinism of his character, had determined to make her an offer of his hand. The information above-mentioned, had by no means crushed his hopes, as he had industriously learned the real situation of her lover; and had therefore no idea of an attachment of so romantic a nature, as could induce a girl of no fortune to renounce a nobleman of a good estate, and no contemptible person, for the sake of a young fellow with whom she could expect little better than
indigence

indigence and obscurity. His acquaintance with the world, and the knowledge he thought he had acquired of the female heart, suffered him not to indulge so extravagant a belief: he therefore sought an opportunity of revealing his passion to Sophia, nor was it long ere chance provided him one exactly to his wish.

The ladies had agreed on going to Kensington gardens; his lordship and Mr. Sydney (who was a constant attendant on Miss Addington) were of the party. At the end of one of the walks, Lord Molton took out of his pocket, a handsome pair of Dresden ruffles, which he had that morning purchased, and asked the opinion of the company, as to their value. Caroline and Miss Addington, slightly examining them, gave them to Sophia, and immediately turned into a different walk. Sophia, whose hours in the country had been chiefly divided between her needle and her

her books, was a connoisseur in that art; and examining the ruffles with great attention, was so much pleased with the beauty of the work, as to be wholly unobservant of the departure of her company. This was the very crisis his lordship had desired; and he therefore embraced the opportunity to express his passion, in terms so earnest and serious, that she was for some time too much surprised to be able to answer a word. At last she was enough composed to thank him for the honour of his good opinion, of which, she said, she should retain a grateful remembrance; but added, it was impossible she could ever listen to him on the subject, and desired he never more would revive it. The air with which she had uttered this reply, convinced him it was not the result of a coquettish disposition; he was disconcerted. Sophia desired him instantly to conduct
her

her to the company—he affected to comply—and immediately struck into a walk, where he well knew they had not entered.

“ You have enjoined me, my dear
“ Miss Wilson,” resumed he, as they walked on, “ to what it is not in my
“ power to obey you in.—Can a man
“ so deeply enamoured, see the object
“ of his affections, and not express the
“ regard he feels for her?”

“ If that is the case, my lord, I must
“ take care that you don’t see me; for
“ never can I—never ought I to hear
“ these sentiments from your lordship.”

“ Never ought, my dearest Madam—
“ surely I cannot comprehend the
“ term.”

“ No, my lord, I repeat it, I never
“ ought; your Lordship’s rank—my
“ own situation, make it highly im-
“ proper.”

“ Oh,

“ Oh, Miss Wilson! why will you
“ thus wound my very soul by expref-
“ fions, which imply a doubt of my
“ fincerity? Had I addreffed you, Ma-
“ dam, with vague unmeaning protes-
“ tations of my paffion, you had a
“ right to have doubted; but great as
“ the charms of your lovely perfon
“ are, ’tis the incomparable noblenefs
“ of your mind, that I chiefly adore.—
“ I make you a tender of my heart,
“ lovelieft of women; but with that,
“ I tremblingly offer my hand alfo.”

Sophia blufhing, replied, with fome
confufion—“ I muft hear no more, my
“ Lord. I cannot accept the honour
“ you would confer.”

“ Ah, then I fear, Miss Wilson, your
“ affections are already engaged.”

Sophia looked down and was filent.

“ Speak deareft Madam,” (he re-
fumed) “ with that franknefs, which fo
“ nobly

" nobly distinguishes you—tell me that

" I have a happier rival.

" Oh, my Lord, say no more I entreat you."

" By heaven but I must—tell a criminal on the rack, not to utter a groan. As well, charming Sophia, may you expect me to be silent, when my heart is so warmly interested—no, I must still importune you, till you confirm my hopes or fears."

The impassioned accents in which he spoke, really frightened her: " What must I say, my Lord," said she tremulously.

" Say you will accept my hand," cried he impatiently.

" Impossible, my Lord."

" Say then your affections are engaged."

" Well, my Lord, I own it," blushing.

" Hah !

“ Hah !” exclaimed he wildly, “ then
“ it is too true; but consider, Miss Wil-
“ son, (after a moment’s pause) confi-
“ der your own merits, the rank they
“ most certainly entitle you to; consider
“ also the unpromising prospects of
“ this happy man, and be more just,
“ I beseech you, to yourself.”

“ But would your Lordship be con-
“ tent with a hand without a heart?”

“ No, Madam,” replied he, warmly ;
“ my passion is of too ardent a nature,
“ to be satisfied with that alone ; but
“ so exalted an opinion have I of your
“ nobleness of mind, that should pru-
“ dence induce you to accept the hand
“ I offer, I am convinced your virtue
“ would secure me the first place in
“ your affections.”

“ We will not dispute that point,
“ my Lord ; suffice it for me to add,
“ that honour, to say no more, forbids
“ my listening to such a proposal.”

“ Where

“Where have you been?” cried Miss Addington, who now perceived them approaching, “we have been half the garden over, to seek for you.”

“I was so much engaged,” returned Sophia, hesitatingly, “in looking at the work, that I really did not perceive your departure.” Caroline excessively longed to indulge her splenetic humour on this occasion; but she dreaded a second retort from his Lordship, and was therefore forced to content herself with darting some envious glances at Sophia, whom she could not forgive, for engrossing so much of his company; but as soon as they were returned home, she gave full scope to her spiteful humour, and called her in plain terms, a vain, conceited chit, in having the folly to suppose Lord Molton was caught by her baby face.

“Really, Caroline,” returned she, with a most provoking sangfroid, “if
“ I had

" I had known you had a particular
" desire for his Lordship's company,
" I would have hinted it to him, as de-
" licately as possible."

" I, Miss, a desire for his company!
" no truly, I know better what belongs
" to my character, than to lay baits for
" an empty title."

" It is really a pity," returned So-
phia, " continuing the metaphor,
" that anglers so soon lose their tem-
" per, when the bait happens not to
" strike."

This was the first time Sophia had
condescended to reply to any of Caro-
line's malicious inuendoes. Perhaps it
being now unexpected, contributed to
aggravate the fury of that ill-tempered
girl, for she instantly lost all patience,
and flying across the room, had just
laid her hands on Sophia's cap, when
the door suddenly opened, and disco-
vered the justice.

" Hey-

“ Hey-day, girls, what squabbling !”

Caroline abashed and enraged, at being discovered in so furious an attitude, flung herself into a chair, sobbing from mere passion. As soon as she could speak, she exclaimed :

“ It is monstrous hard,—and I am
“ sure my papa would not suffer me
“ to be insulted, by such a beggarly
“ thing.”

“ Hold, Miss,” interrupted the justice, piqued at hearing such a degrading epithet bestowed on Sophia : “ that
“ lady is not a beggar, nor shall be
“ while I live.”

“ My dear Sir,” resumed she, having by this time summoned all her art to her aid ; “ I was only tenderly remonstrating to Miss Wilson, on the imprudence of being alone an hour and
“ a half with Lord Molton, in a private part of the garden, when she
“ abused me in the most violent manner.
“ ner.

“ner. To be ill-treated for good advice,
“is certainly very provoking: I own
“I was enraged; but for the future,
“she shall act as she please.”

With which designing speech, she abruptly left the room.

“I hope, Miss Wilson,” said the justice, as soon as she was gone,
“this is not true—you would not act
“so imprudently I think.”

“I acknowledge, Sir,” she replied, with all the frankness of innocence,
“I was with his lordship; but our
“separation from the company, was
“entirely undesigned by either of us.”

“Well, well, so I should hope; but
“what was the subject he entertained
“you upon? Eh——

Sophia looked embarrassed.

“Love, I suppose,” he resumed.—
“Come tell me, did not his Lordship
“make you an offer of his addresses?

“Aye,

“ Aye, I see he did; but did you accept them, child?”——

“ Indeed, Sir, I did not.”

“ That’s well—I believe you Sophia — you shall not be a loser by it, I assure you—a plain country gentleman, with four thousand a year, is better than a fopling Lord, whose estate is probably every foot of it mortgaged—is it not, you little rogue?”——

Sophia complaining, of a head-ach, desired to withdraw. “ Aye, go to bed sweet,” he returned, “ and get yourself well for my sake.”

As soon as Sophia got up to her chamber, she burst into tears—the behaviour of Caroline distressed her extremely, for though she had affected to treat it with indifference, she nevertheless felt it most severely. The shafts of envy and ill nature, never failed to wound her susceptible heart—a frown, a look

a look of contempt, or an unkind expression, excited in her breast, a degree of anguish, which those who are not much burdened with sensibility, can have but a faint idea of.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A MEDLEY OF PLOTS.

SOME mornings after this, as Lord Molton was walking in the Park, he was accosted by a Mr. Allsford, a fashionable libertine, with whom he had long been on terms of the strictest friendship; that is, they had been mutually aiding and assistant to each other in all the schemes of intemperance, which their dissipated principles led them into: for we assure the courteous reader, that the term friendship, with

persons of their character, means nothing more.

“What! my Lord Molton in the Penferoso style?”

“Even so Jack, I assure thee.”

“What, has your favourite Dulcinea been seized with a qualm of conscience? or has some hen-pecked d——l discovered your design of honouring him with a pair of antlers?”

“Neither—you cannot guess—I am seriously in love.”

“Hah! hah! hah!—that indeed, I should never have guessed. In love—what, my Lord Molton turned a whining lover at last. Prithee who is the girl?”

“You have seen Miss Wilson.”

“Seen her! Yes, often. Marry, I am glad it is no worse.—Come come, the malady then I find is not incurable.”

“What do’st mean, Jack?”

“Why

" Why I mean, that she has neither
" fortune nor friends, to stand in the
" way of your wishes. She is certainly
" come-at-able."

" You mistake; her virtue is invin-
" cible."

" Have you then tried it?"

" No faith, nor ever would, if I
" could help it. I meant to have mar-
" ried her. Can't believe it?"

" As you affirm it, my Lord, other-
" wise had the whole world joined in
" the assertion, I should not have cre-
" dited so improbable a story. But
" give me leave to ask, Molton, how
" long you have been insane."

" Ever since I knew this bewitching
" girl—if it be insanity."

" Well, if nothing but a matrimonial
" dose will effect your cure, why don't
" you apply the medicine? Or do'st
" think it worse than the disease?"

“ I will tell thee, Jack. I was fool
“ enough to make her a formal offer of
“ marriage, though I know she is both
“ destitute of fortune, and of an ob-
“ scure birth; but, would you believe
“ it? though the proposal must have
“ flattered the vanity of any woman
“ in her situation, she is unmoved at
“ my suit.”

“ All finesse, my Lord; mere female
“ artifice.”

“ No, her heart is pre-engaged—and
“ to a young fellow, as obscure, and
“ destitute as herself.”

“ What a romantic being is it! But
“ what then will you do?”

“ Force her to marry me.”

“ I blush for you, my Lord. What,
“ tie yourself to a wife who acknow-
“ ledges no penchant for your person!
“ Positively you must wear the strait
“ waistcoat.”

“ No,

“ No, Jack, I mean so to contrive
 “ it, that she shall think my conde-
 “ scending to marry her, a favour
 “ which demands all her gratitude and
 “ affection.—I design, if I can accom-
 “ plish the scheme, to carry her off:
 “ when I shall take such effectual care
 “ to humble her pride, that she will
 “ be glad to sue for the hand she de-
 “ spises now.”

“ An excellent scheme—or you may
 “ then be sure of her, on your own
 “ terms, my Lord. There will be no
 “ necessity of acting the farce of matri-
 “ mony in that case, I presume.”

“ Faith I can’t answer for myself;
 “ but you promise me your assistance
 “ if necessary?”

“ Can you doubt it? You know I am
 “ ever yours.”

Company then joining them, put an
 end to the conversation, and soon after
 his Lordship departed, in order to
 con-

consider more fully of his plan. As Sophia never went out alone, it had somewhat the appearance of impracticability; but in such cases, the difficulty attending the pursuit enhances the value of success.

Sophia's situation with the Addingtons became daily more disagreeable. Caroline's jealousy was grown to so intolerable a height, that she no longer observed towards her the common forms of civility. She had also overheard some hints from the justice, which convinced her that he had made proposals of marriage to Sophia — an intelligence she failed not to communicate to Miss Addington, who not altogether pleased at the news, regarded that young lady in a light so cold and unfriendly, as rendered her residence in that family extremely painful, and she determined on soliciting permission from Mrs. Stanley, for her quitting town.

With

With this view, she sat down in the parlour one afternoon, when the ladies were gone out on a visit; but she had scarcely begun her letter, when the justice entered.

“ Writing, Miss Wilson?”

“ Yes, Sir, to Mrs. Stanley.”

He had not however the politeness to withdraw; but seating himself by her side, began to address her in the old strain, of love, &c. which was always most painful to Sophia, who rose immediately to quit the room.

“ No, Miss Wilson,” said he, taking her hand, “ I must not permit you to leave me—at least hear if you cannot pity me.”—The moving softness of his accent, affected the gentle heart of Sophia; she could not bear the idea that a man of his years—the guardian too of her Hartly, should implore her pity.—She sat down in a chair, and

fighed — the justice dropped on one knee.

“ Rise, Sir, I intreat,” said she;
“ that posture but ill becomes a per-
“ son of your character.”

“ No, Sophia,” said he, ardently,
“ I will not rise till you consent to
“ make me happy.”

“ I cannot suffer that stile from the
“ friend, the paternal guardian of Mr.
“ Hartly.”

“ Why will you name him? Banish
“ his idea from your mind, and con-
“ descend to become the wife of a man
“ who adores you, and whose fortune
“ will support you in the condition for
“ which you were undoubtedly de-
“ signed.”

“ Not a word more on the subject,”
said she, attempting to rise, but he
seized her hand, and pressed it with
emotion to his lips.

At

At that moment the door opened, and Miss Addington, accompanied by Caroline, appeared with a countenance inflamed by passion. They had listened some time at the door, and overheard all that had passed; for the envious Miss Brown, not doubting but the justice would embrace the opportunity of their absence to urge his suit, had prevailed on Miss Addington to return home, and surprise them unexpectedly. The justice, excessively chagrined at the presence of his sister, slipped out of the room, leaving Sophia to endure the violent effusion of her resentment—it burst, indeed, like a dreadful tempest on her head.

“ So, Miss !” said the enraged lady,
“ have I at last discovered your arts ?
“ Mean as you are, to practise your
“ base designs on a family, from which
“ you have received such obligations.”

K 5

“ Indeed

“Indeed, Ma’am,” replied the trembling Sophia, “I have not deserved—
“indeed I am innocent of——”

“Oh yes!” interrupted Miss Ad-
dington, in a sarcastic tone, “I know
“you are all innocence. But know,
“ungrateful wretch, I will no longer
“bear you in my sight. This night
“you shall, I am resolved, quit the
“house; so pack up your things and
“depart instantly—for here you sleep
“no more.”

With this menace, she flung out of
the room. Caroline’s looks wore an
air of malignant satisfaction, as she
followed her. Half dead with terror and
astonishment, Sophia sunk down on the
sofa—What could she do? It was late,
and the evening drew on apace. The
next morning she would have gladly set
out for her dear native village—but she
must quit the house that very hour.
Where to go, she knew not—no ac-
quaintance

quaintance in London—a stranger to almost every part of it. “ ’Tis hard—
“ ’tis very hard,” cried she, bursting in-
to tears.

A more distressing situation for a feeling mind could scarcely have been imagined. We presume Miss Addington, in the fury of her resentment, never once turned her thoughts to the dangers which awaited a young woman so circumstanced; otherwise we think she could not have been so cruel as to deny her the asylum of her house, till her removal might have been conveniently adjusted. We hazard this conjecture, being unwilling to represent a female character as totally devoid of humanity.

At the very moment when Sophia was sinking beneath the anguish which distracted her breast, Lord Molton entered the room.

K 5

“ For

“For heaven’s sake,” cried he, in the utmost astonishment, “what can have happened, dearest Madam, to occasion this poignant distress?”

Sophia could only answer by sighs and tears.

“Speak, charming Miss Wilson—Oh, honour me with your confidence—my life, Madam, is at your service!”

“Leave me, my lord,” said she—“leave a poor unfortunate girl.”

“No, never,” returned he, ardently—“till I see you more composed, or am permitted to share your affliction.”

The most distant gleam of friendship has a charm which allures the wretched to look up to it. We wonder not, then, that Sophia, oppressed as she was by the keenest anguish—loaded with unmerited reproach, and abandoned, apparently, by all the world, should readily pour her sorrows into the sympathizing bosom

form of Lord Molton. She related to him the cause of her sorrow.

“Is it possible,” cried he, in a tone of displeasure, “that Miss Addington could be so inhuman?—Look on me, lovely creature, as a friend who will never desert you—have confidence in my advice.”

“What is that, my lord?”

“To leave the house immediately.”

“That I am compelled to do:—but whither, alas!—”

“I have a relation, Madam, who will be proud to receive Miss Wilton,” interrupted his lordship.

As much distressed as Sophia was, she immediately perceived the impropriety of such a measure, and positively declined it.

“No, my lord,” said she, “I will set out instantly for Coombe—that happy native village, which would to heaven I had never quitted!”

“ You alarm me—What! travel by night, and alone?

“ Oh, my lord, I dread not the night—the sooner I am from hence, the better—I have a dear friend who will rejoice to receive me.”

His lordship paused——“ Well, Madam,” said he, “ may I then hope you will permit me to protect you?”

“ I shall go alone, my lord—What is there to fear?”

She then rang for a servant to order a chaise; but these people having most of them witnessed the disgraceful treatment she had received from their lady, thought themselves exempted from all respect to her summons—not a soul appeared.

“ My servant, Madam,” said his lordship, “ will readily execute your commands—Shall I send my footman for a chaise?”

Sophia bowed assent. His lordship stepped out, and in a few minutes returned,

turned, telling her a chaise was ordered. He had, indeed, offered his own chariot; but Sophia had peremptorily refused it.

This interval he therefore employed in urging his passion with all the warmth imaginable; and earnestly solicited permission to visit her at Mrs. Stanley's.

"As a friend, my lord," she returned, "I shall always respect your lordship—but in no other light."

"Cruel Miss Wilson!—How cold is that expression!—but I will no longer importune you at present. Your sorrows, Madam, are mine—and the indignity you have received I shall resent as such."—

"Heaven forbid, my lord, you should bestow a thought on a slight affront offered to one whom nobody knows or cares for."

Just as his lordship was about to reply, the chaise drove up to the door.—Poor Sophia had no kind friend to take leave

leave of—the Justice was from home—he had gone out some hours before, to divert his chagrin. Miss Addington and Caroline were above stairs; they looked out at the window as Lord Molton handed her to the chaise—Sophia bowed to each; but neither returned the salute, and the chaise drove off.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XIX.

AS USUAL IN NOVELS—DISTRESS.

FOR the first half hour, Sophia was so wholly absorbed in meditating on the disagreeable occurrence of the day, that she scarcely perceived she was out of the noise of London. At length, her thoughts assumed a more agreeable turn. The reflection, that she was now on her way to her best—her beloved friend, gave her a pleasure she had long been unacquainted with. She had never liked the town, and the treatment she had received from the family in which she resided, had not contributed to remove her distaste. The tranquillity—the social pleasures of Mrs. Stanley's friendly mansion, arose to her imagination; and she determined no more to resign

resign them for the fallacious allurements of public life. Nothing could have exceeded the beauty of the evening: the moon was risen, and shewed, with a pleasing light, the agreeable views that at every turning opened to the sight. The spring was pretty far advanced, and the opening buds and flowers diffused a balsamic odour through the air, which, together with her own agreeable reflections, rendered the journey hitherto excessively pleasant.

At length she enquired of the driver, how much farther it was to the next stage? The man replied, "not more than three miles;" and again drove on with the utmost rapidity. The fatigue her spirits had endured in the day, disposed her to sleep; and, on awaking about an hour after, she was surprised, on looking out of the window, to find no town in view. Another half hour elapsed—still no prospect of any town.

"Surely,

"Surely, driver," said she, "you must have mistaken the road!"

"I believe not, Madam—but I will enquire at the cottage yonder."

The man alighted from his horse, knocked at the door, and said something to the old woman who came out with a light—then approached the chaise, with the utmost concern in his countenance.

"Then we are really out of the way?" said Sophia, reading his looks.

"Not much, Madam—the next turning will set us right. Z—ds! I thought I knew every step of this road—but we shall soon get to the next stage," added he, remounting and whipping his horses, as if he meant to revenge his own blunder on the poor beasts.

It was about ten o'clock, when he again stopped the chaise, seemingly in great embarrassment.

"Lord have mercy," cried Sophia, inexpressibly alarmed—"where are we?"

"I will

"I will enquire," returned the driver, in a tone of perplexity, and immediately knocked at the door of a little snug box; when a tight country girl came out with a light.

"Be so good," cried the affrighted Sophia, "to tell us where we are."

"Upon Ascot Heath, Madam," returned the girl.

"Deuce take me for a fool," exclaimed the fellow: "Have I been whipping and cutting so long for this?—" "Madam, I humbly ask your pardon, but indeed I thought I knew the road blindfolded."

Sophia was quite sick with vexation. "Let us drive any where for the night," said she, with the utmost agitation.

By this time, a genteel looking young man came out of the villa, and, being told the case, stepped up to the chaise—It was a face Sophia had seen before.

"Mr.

“ Mr. Allsford!” exclaimed she, recollecting him.

The gentleman bowed—looked at her for half a second——“ Heaven’s!” cried he, in a tone of surprize—“ Miss Wilson! I am heartily sorry, Madam, for this disagreeable adventure; but I beg you will permit my mother the happiness of accommodating you for the night.”

“ By no means. I thank you, Mr. Allsford—only have the goodness to direct the driver to the next town or village.”

“ There is none nearer, Madam, than eight or ten miles.”

“ And that,” rejoined the driver, “ is farther than the poor beasts can crawl.”

“ You must, then, Madam, favour us with your company.—The driver shall have a bed, and his horses be taken care of. To-morrow,” added he,

he, "you will be able to set out as soon
" as you like."

Sophia found there was no alternative; yet, in this perplexity, thought it a happiness to have met with some one she knew. She gave her hand to Mr. Allsford, who handed her respectfully out of the chaise, and conducted her into the parlour, where, as soon as she was seated, he stepped out to give proper orders that care might be taken of the horses. Mean while the servant girl entered with cake and wine. As she was presenting it, she said that Mrs. Allsford was confined to her chamber by a slow fever, and that her master was half distracted on his mother's account; "for," added she, "he is a very tender-hearted
" gentleman."

Mr Allsford returning, made some enquiries after the Addington family, and expressed his surprise at Sophia's quitting town so early; to which, however,

ever, she returned a slight answer, and soon after supper being brought in, he genteelly apologized for his mother's being unable to perform the honours of the table, adding, she would have been extremely happy in the company of so amiable a guest. Sophia was prevailed on to eat the wing of a chicken—and after chatting some little time after supper, it growing late, she retired to the apartment provided for her; to which she was attended by the same modest looking girl she had seen before.—Having locked the door, she soon resigned herself to the balmy power of Morpheus—suspecting no ill, and elate with the pleasing hope of passing the next night at her dear Mrs Stanley's peaceful habitation, she enjoyed so serene a repose, that it was past eight the next morning ere she awoke.—Vexed at having lost at least two hours of her journey, she hastily arose and
ringing

ringing for the servant, desired her to tell the driver she would be ready to set out in a quarter of an hour.

“ Law, Ma’am,” said the girl, “ he is gone back to London !”

“ Gone!—What can you mean ?”

“ He said, Ma’am, that as you were not stirring, he could not stay; for his master would be offended.”

“ Oh, why,” cried Sophia, surprised and vexed, “ did you not call me?—Where can I get a chaise ?”

“ Oh, Ma’am, as for that, my master will order one, no doubt.”

Sophia then shut the door, and sitting down upon the bed, burst into tears. “ How unfortunate,” said she, “ is this journey!—Nothing but disappointment attends me!” However, unwilling to lose more time, she went down stairs, to see what could be done. Breakfast was on the table; and Mr. Allsford, after paying her the compliments

ments of the morning, desired she would not be uneasy; for he would immediately send a servant to the next town for a chaise.

They were sipping the second cup of coffee, when who should enter the room but Lord Molton?

“ Good-morrow, Allsford. Heavens! “ Is it possible?—Miss Wilson !”

Sophia, colouring with surprise, related the untoward accident that had retarded her journey.

“ Thanks to my happy stars,” cried his lordship, “ which conducted me hither this morning! Faith I had no idea they had so superlative a happiness in store for me:—but I must beg to join you in your morning repast, for I have not breakfasted.”

Sophia began to express great impatience for the return of the messenger; but his lordship, on being told the affair, assured her he would procure her a

chaife in half an hour at farthest ; which promise, we suspect, he had not the remotest intention of performing.

For it is time to inform the reader (if he does not suspect it already) that the whole of this matter was a scheme of Lord Molton's; projected at the very moment the unsuspecting fair-one had commissioned him to order the chaife, to convey her from B.-street. Ever fertile in invention, he had got a creature of his own to drive; who, agreeable to the instructions he had received, had taken a wide circuit round the country, in order to give Mr. Allsford time to get to the house, where he had arrived before the lady. The house, in which he acted as major domo, was, in fact, a hunting-seat of his lordship's. The modest looking country girl, a poor creature whom Lord Molton had seduced, and then kept. The story of Mrs. Allsford, a fiction, framed on purpose to humour the delicacy

delicacy of Sophia; which, it was imagined, might be alarmed at the idea of stopping at a house wherein there was no lady to preside. We must, however, do his lordship the justice to acknowledge, he had no immediate design of offering the least outrage to Sophia's honour:—all he aimed at was, to compel her to marry him; but, in case she obstinately persisted in the refusal, his dernier resource was, indeed, intended to be, what he had before hinted to Mr. Allsford in the parlour.

CHAPTER XX.

A CIRCUIT OF DETRACTION.

MISS Brown finding, with inexpressible joy, that her arts had effected the final departure of her fair rival, immediately took up her pen and wrote the following letter to a female acquaintance at Coombe. It being somewhat of a curiosity in its kind, we here present it verbatim.

“ To Miss Hooper.”

“ Dear Mis,

“ I dare say you wonders mutch that
“ I have not rote to you since my being
“ in London, but reely I have not had
“ the time. We go out so mutch, and
“ see such a quantity of people of ranck
“ at

“ at home, that one has no time for any
“ thing. O, Mis, you would like Lon-
“ don vastly—such rattling of coches,
“ and such a delightful noise for ever in
“ one’s ears, ’tis reely charming. But,
“ do you know, Mis, that Sophia Wil-
“ son is gone away?—She went last nite
“ —and—but pray don’t mention it, as
“ I hates to speak ill of people—she
“ went away just before it was dark,
“ with Lord Molton!—I suppose she is
“ at Combe by this time—but I dares to
“ say you think as I do, that it was not
“ quite so prudent to ride all nite with
“ a gentleman—but that’s not all the
“ imprudent things Mis has done, I
“ promise you. Well, edecation is a
“ fine thing; and happy it is for those
“ whose friends can bestow it on their
“ children, as, thank God, mine could.
“ I desires my love to all enquiring friends,
“ and ham, dear Mis, your loving friend,
“ Caroline Brown.”

The

The justice's astonishment at finding, on his return, that Miss Wilson had left the family, was inexpressible; but, on enquiring the cause of so sudden a measure, he could only learn, that she went away with Lord Molton, just before it was dark; whether with an intention of going to Coombe, or on a party of pleasure with his lordship, Miss Addington, who gave him this account, could not tell. The credulity of his worship swallowed this improbable story; and it being accompanied by some anecdotes, which the invention of this lady and her ingenious colleague had supplied, worked him up to a degree of madness. He raged—stormed—curled the whole sex; and, at length, railed at his sister, for not preventing so imprudent a step.

“Was she not,” said he, “committed to your care—and ought you not to have watched over her conduct?”

This

This reproof, though dictated by disappointment rather than any proper idea of propriety, was certainly a just one; and perhaps, for that reason, most galling to the lady for whom it was intended, Whether that impertinent meddler, Conscience, stared her in the face, or not, we cannot say; but she felt the full force of the rebuke, and fell into a most violent passion, which ended at last in tears and hysterics.

The justice, highly incensed, retired to his apartment. Some little time, however, and a few well-timed insinuations, not very favourable to Sophia's character, moderated his resentment to his sister, and he began to entertain a most implacable hatred for the very girl, whom he so lately professed to adore. So rapid is the succession of contrary passions in illiberal minds.

Mr. Sydney was deputed by Miss Addington, to watch the motions of

L 4

Lord

Lord Molton; and he at last discovered that his lordship had not been in town for some days. This was sufficient for that lady; and she immediately pronounced Sophia a most abandoned girl—forgetting her own inhospitality, in forcing her from her house at a late hour, without a friend to protect her; and that, whatever imprudence the poor girl might have committed in consequence of it, was justly chargeable to the inhumanity with which she had been treated. But thus it is, that the faults of a deserving person are recorded in brass—while the causes of them are wrote in dust.

Miss Brown's epistle being arrived at Coombe, the lady to whom it was addressed, immediately paid a visit to Mrs. Stanley; and expressed the greatest astonishment at not finding Miss Wilson there.

“ Well;—

“ Well;—and have you not heard of
 “ her, Mrs. Stanley?” with a mysteri-
 ous air.

“ Not lately.”

“ No!—Why, I believe she has left
 “ London.”

“ Impossible!—What can you mean,
 “ Miss Hooper?”

Miss Hooper then informed her, that
 Sophia had left the Addingtons on
 Monday evening, accompanied by Lord
 Molton.

“ Oh, God!” cried Mrs. Stanley,
 “ what do I hear?” and instantly burst
 into tears. The other, attempting to
 console her, insinuated that, as the case
 stood, Miss Wilson was not deserving
 her concern; adding—“ ’Tis a pity good-
 “ nature should be abused—but I al-
 “ ways thought how it would be.”

“ If,” returned Mrs. Stanley, firmly, “ you
 “ thought ill of Sophia Wilson, you did
 “ her great injustice. She was purity itself,

“ before this unfortunate journey to
“ London; and is so still, I trust.”

“ True, Madam,” replied Miss
Hooper, “ she may—one can’t, indeed,
“ say how this affair happened.—Pray
“ compose yourself—I hope soon you
“ will have better news.—Good-mor-
“ row.”

Just as she had quitted Mrs. Stanley’s house, she saw, at a little distance, a Mr. Andrew Algebra; to whom she held up her finger, as a signal that she had something important to communicate.

Algebra was one of those despicable beings, who may be said to live on news and scandal, as theameleon is supposed to exist on air. This contemptible creature (man we durst not call him, since his disposition and manners render him unworthy the appellation) though rich, and unmarried, was so excessively parsimonious, that he even denied himself
the

the common necessaries of life; and seemed to have no other business in the world, to which he was certainly a nuisance, than merely to know what other people were doing, and to misrepresent every action, as the result of hypocrisy or vice; the model of which he undoubtedly took from his own principles and character. This wretch, expecting to meet with a delicious morsel of detraction, hastened to obey the summons;—nor was he disappointed.

“ I wonder, Mr. Algebra, that Sophia Wilson is not come home !”

“ Was she expected ?”

“ Yes—and, I am told, went from London four days ago. Where she can be gone, I can’t imagine.”

“ ’Tis very odd !” speaking with his teeth closed, as he usually did, “ ’Tis very odd.”

“ Between you and me, she set off late at night with Lord Molton.”

L 6

“ Hah !

“ Hah ! that looks suspicious.—Was
“ she acquainted with Lord Molton ? ”

“ She is certainly gone off with
“ child,” said Miss Hooper.

It may appear strange to many of our readers, that as the letter had specified nothing of that kind, Miss Hooper should have been in possession of such a piece of intelligence. But the truth is, it was a foible incident to that lady, which she could by no means avoid, that, whenever any of her female neighbours happened to make an excursion, the motive of which they had omitted to acquaint her with, she had an irresistible propensity to the pronouncing them withdrawn for certain prudential reasons.

“ Sophia Wilson is gone off with
“ child,” said Miss Hooper.

That afternoon, a select party was invited to meet at her house, that the point might be fully discussed. Miss
Hooper

Hooper having imparted the secret—these friends, of course, whispered it to their friends—who told it to their friends; and so on, ad infinitum, till poor Sophia's reputation was effectually destroyed, not only in the village, but for as many miles round it, as her hitherto spotless name had been known;—every one echoing the report which Miss Hooper had so ingeniously devised, that Miss Wilson was gone off with child. Here we could lay by the pen, and pause with the deepest regret, that the legislature has as yet devised no adequate punishment for that part of social life—the detractor

“ Who steals my purse, steals trash;

“ ’Twas mine—’tis his—and has been slave
to thousands:

“ But *she* who filches from me my good name,

“ Robs me of that which not enriches *her*,

“ But makes me poor indeed.”

Leaving,

Leaving, however, the Miss Hoopers of the age to enjoy that malignant satisfaction their efforts no doubt procure them, we return to the benevolent, the amiable Mrs. Stanley; who, as soon as she was alone, went to her *escrutoire*, and, in the fulness of her heart, wrote the following letter.

“ To Miss Addington.”

“ Oh! Miss Addington, What is become of my Sophia?—A rumour prevails here, that she is gone from you; but, alas! she has not reached this mansion, which has been ever open to receive her. I entreat you, good Madam, to enquire with all speed after the poor fugitive.—Tell her, her friend, her own Stanley, will weep over her indiscretions, and fold her to her bleeding heart. Alas! has she not been vilely ensnared?—Yes—it must have been so: Sophia Wilson
would

“ would not voluntarily have commit-
 “ ted an imprudence.—Oh, that de-
 “ tested London!—Why—why did I
 “ consent to her going thither?—Par-
 “ don, Madam, these incoherencies;
 “ but, indeed, you know not what I
 “ feel. The child of my friend—the
 “ darling of my age, to be thus ravished
 “ from me, by the arts of villainy—’tis
 “ too much!——I doubt not, but you
 “ will employ all possible means towards
 “ discovering where she is—in full as-
 “ surance of which, I subscribe myself,
 “ Madam,

“ Your afflicted humble servant,
 “ Augusta Stanley.”

This letter, though it might have ex-
 torted tears from the eyes of a savage,
 had yet no other effect on the lady, to
 whom it was addressed, and her confi-
 dante, Miss Brown, than to excite their
 mirth. They laughed excessively at the
 idea

idea of the pannic Mrs. Stanley was in on the occasion. But what proved a chief source of pleasure to Caroline was, the certainty that her fair rival's good name would now be totally annihilated at Coombe—she longed to be there, to enjoy her triumph, and to secure it. In this light, nothing appeared so eligible to her, as an immediate return to that village; which she determined to effect in a few days at farthest. The justice was surprized that Mrs. Stanley could be so silly as to imagine, any of his family would trouble themselves about an ungrateful girl—and Miss Addington declared, she should not interfere in so scandalous an affair.

The same day, a letter was brought for Miss Wilson. By the superscription they knew it was from Hartly, and the event promised a most delightful entertainment; for Miss Addington declared she would break it open, to have some diversion

diversion at the nonsensical stuff she supposed it contained. Caroline tittered with pleasure—the justice secretly enjoyed the scheme; yet, in order to save appearances, he pretended to fall fast asleep in his elbow chair; though, in reality, he was never more wakeful, and attended heedfully to the contents of the letter, and the ludicrous comments passed on it by the two ladies.

In this letter, Hartly informed his dear Sophia, that fortune had proved most propitious to his wishes; that he was in a line of acquiring a genteel competency in a short time; adding, that he was removed near three hundred miles farther up the country; to which he gave her a full direction. Every line of this epistle was replete with delicacy and tenderness, but it only served to excite the mirth of the company; and, after they had sufficiently commented thereon, Miss Addington put the letter in
her

her pocket, determined that it should never meet the eye of the young lady for whom it was designed.

Caroline declared that, was a gentleman to send her a letter in such a nauseous stile, it would absolutely make her sick.

“And it would any one,” returned Miss Addington, with an envious sneer, “who valued dignity of character.—”
“I’m sure, was Mr. Sydney to send me such an one——”

“You would receive it with infinite pleasure,” interrupted the justice, who now thought proper to awake; “but, indeed, I do not believe he ever will,” added he, in a sarcastic tone; for he by no means approved of the encouragement his sister gave that gentleman.

“Mr. Sydney,” said she, rather piqued, “is a valuable man.”

“You

“ You don’t judge by the weight of
“ his pocket, then, sister, I presume?”

“ No, Sir,” replied she warmly; “ nor
“ did you ever know a woman of sense
“ estimate the merit of a lover by that
“ standard.”

“ Then,” resumed the justice, dryly,
“ give me a woman of prudence.”

“ Pray, brother, did you make wealth
“ the criterion of Miss Wilson’s me-
“ rit?”

The question touched him in the tenderest part—his pride had been hurt, and the wound was not yet healed—he started—looked displeased, but returned no answer; and soon after sullenly left the room.

“ See,” cried Miss Addington, as soon as he was gone, “ how difficult it
“ is to allow others the same liberty we
“ take ourselves. His worship had for-
“ got his own ridiculous amour, when
“ he so severely criticised poor Sydney.

“ I was

" I was resolved not to yield the
" point; though, between ourselves,
" child, I don't design to have him."

" You can't be serious!"

" Indeed I am—he does well enough
" for a dangler; but I know better than
" to part with my liberty to a mere for-
" tune-hunter."

Caroline had not expected to find a
spice of coquetry in a woman of near
forty: she looked a little surprised, but
applauded the spirit of such a resolu-
tion; and then began to make some un-
favourable remarks on that gentleman,
imagining they would be highly agree-
able to her friend, who she supposed
would readily join in the raillery; but,
contrary to her expectations, Miss Ad-
dington reddened, and told her, she was
an ill-natured girl, who never spoke well
of any gentleman that did not pay his
court immediately to herself. The poor
confidante, finding she had mistaken her
cue,

cue, asked pardon with the utmost humility; for, though she was imperious to the last degree, where she durst be so, yet, to superiors, she was the most obsequious girl in the world.—No uncommon characteristic, we conjecture, of a little mind.

Two days after, Miss Brown, all impatience to be at Coombe at so important a crisis, pretended to have received letters from thence which required her instant return: she therefore took leave of Miss Addington, and sat out for that village with all speed; where, as soon as she arrived, she waited on Mrs. Stanley, and informed her, that although every method had been tried for discovering the place of Miss Wilson's retreat, no tidings had as yet been obtained of her.

The good old lady, on hearing this account, fainted away: it was some time before she could be brought to herself; and when she recovered, it was only to bewail

bewail her dear lost Sophia, in the most heart-rending terms:—so violent, indeed, was her sorrow, that it brought on a fixed melancholy, which threatened to cut the vital thread.

Mean time, Miss Brown, in concert with her friend Miss Hooper, had carefully settled matters, for the impeding all possibility of Sophia's reinstatement with her venerable benefactress. In these measures she could not possibly have been actuated by any other motive than her implacable hatred to that lovely girl; and had not this sentiment operated so powerfully in her breast, we think she must have felt some pity for the unspeakable distress of Mrs. Stanley. As for Miss Hooper, whatever her secret motives might have been, she chose to conceal them under the specious pretext, that it was highly proper for Mrs. Stanley's future repose. She never more should hear of a girl who had so greatly

greatly disturbed it. With this pretence she concurred, most zealously, in every scheme that was likely to effect that end. The first step, of course, was to intercept any letter that might arrive from her.

“ But how can we manage it?” said Caroline.

“ Do you know the post-woman?”

This hint was sufficient. Miss Brown that very evening called at the cottage where this poor creature lived. She was a widow with a family of eight children, and scarcely any other support for them, than what she earned by going thrice a week to the next town, to convey letters to and from the post-office; for each of which of which she received a penny. The children were at supper on brown bread, when Caroline entered.

“ So Betty,” said she, “ you are serving your little family.”

“ As

“ As well as I can, Ma’am,” she returned; very much surprised at the visit.

“ You find it hard enough, no doubt, to provide for them, Betty—but here is something towards it,”—putting a guinea into her hand.

Betty, who had never been in possession of so large a sum before, was for some minutes unable to speak. She looked at it again, as doubtful whether to credit so extraordinary an instance of liberality.—“ God bless you, Ma’am,” at last she articulated, dropping on her knees, and sobbing with grateful joy.

“ You are welcome to it, Betty—But don’t you go sometimes to the post-office?”

“ Yes, Ma’am; or I could not get bread for my poor children.”

“ Well, Betty, you will take care to deliver any letters for me, as soon as you get them—and, Betty—if a letter

“letter was to come for Mrs. Stanley,
“could you not leave it at my house?”

“To be sure, Ma’am!—I would do
“any thing you desired.—Yes, yes; I
“will certainly bring it to you.”

“Do so, Betty; it is only to prevent
“Mrs. Stanley from being too suddenly
“surprised: for, you know, she is not
“well!—You will not forget it.”

“No, Ma’am,” cried the grateful
Betty; and away tripped Caroline, highly
pleased at having so effectually carried
her point.

Gold! Omnipotent Gold! How irresistible art thou! Mankind, in all ages, have bowed down to thee, and still will continue to do so, as long as the bowels of thy mother earth shall produce thee.—How supreme is thy power!—Canst thou not counteract love, honesty, justice, nay, even truth—divine truth, itself? Wherefore, then, should we regard, with astonishment, the effects of thy all-powerful

influence; when, from the liberal hand of Miss Brown, thou descendest, in the fair form of Charity, into the humble cottage of the indigent Betty Law-son?

End of Vol. I.



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